A.M. 1930 f
J. Lapidus
c.1

Boston University
College of Liberal Arts
Library

THE GIFT OF The Author

A.M.1930
1
c.1

June 1930

p6467

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE EVOLUTION OF A DRAMATIC REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

Submitted by

Joseph Lapidus

(B.S., Boston University, 1929)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

p6467

upstairs
378.744
BO
A.M. 1930
l
c.1

OUTLINE

I Introduction

II Statement of the Classical Rules

III Summary of the Préface de Cromwell

IV Influence of Crébillon and the romanesque

V La Motte's Critical works

VI Nivelle de La Chaussée and the comédie larmoyante

VII Influence of Voltaire
- a) His critical writings
- b) His dramatic innovations

VII I Diderot and the drame bourgeois

IX Beaumarchais'work with the genre sérieux

X Sedaine's Le Philosophe sans le savoir

XI Importance and influence of Mercier's doctrines

XII The melodrama and its close relation to the drame romantique

XII Conclusion

OUTLINE

I Introduction

II Statement of the Classical Rules

III Summary of the Préface de Cromwell

IV Influence of Crébillon and the romanesque

V La Motte's Critical works

VI Nivelle de La Chaussée and the comédie larmoyante

VII Influence of Voltaire
a) His critical writings
b) His dramatic innovations

VII I Diderot and the drame bourgeois

IX Beaumarchais' work with the genre sérieux

X Sedaine's Le Philosophe sans le savoir

XI Importance and influence of Mercier's doctrines

XII The mélodrame and its close relation to the drame romantique

XII Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this work to show that the principles proclaimed by Victor Hugo in the Préface de Cromwell and presumably put into practice in Hernani and the other Romantic dramas were not new for France. The development of the French dramatic theory and practice in the 18th century will be studied and an effort made to show that the principles and doctrines of the Romantic drama had been enunciated and put into practice in that century by various French dramatists and critics. No effort will be made to demonstrate the direct influence of Shakespeare and other foreign dramatists upon the Romantic drama.

INTRODUCTION

The Préface de Cromwell, that document which has been called the manifesto of dramatic liberty, written in 1827, contains most of the doctrines of the Romantic school of French drama. It is probably the most widely read of all French dramatic prefaces and the impossible play that it precedes is probably the least read of all French dramas. A document that proclaims liberty in any domain must be directed against conditions that are beleived to be restrictive - in this case, the restrictive conditions were the rules of French classical tragedy. It is desirable, therefore, that a brief summary be made of those rules and conditions.

French classical tragedy reached its greatest development during the years 1636- 1685. According to the rules which had been developed under the classic tradition, a tragedy must be written in Alexandrine lines in alternating couplets of masculine and feminine rhymes, and the unities of time, place, and action must be rigorously observed. The subjects of tragedy should be chosen from ancient history, mythology, or legend, and the characters should represent kings, queens, or others in aristocratic society.

Classical tragedy had a stately dignity and was often filled with beautiful verses and long tirades. Violent ac-

The Préface de Cromwell, that document which has been called the manifesto of dramatic liberty, written in 1827, contains most of the doctrines of the Romantic school of French drama. It is probably the most widely read of all French dramatic prefaces and the impossible play that it precedes is probably the least read of all French dramas. A document that proclaims liberty in any domain must be directed against conditions that are believed to be restrictive - in this case, the restrictive conditions were the rules of French classical tragedy. It is desirable, therefore, that a brief summary be made of those rules and conditions.

French classical tragedy reached its greatest development during the years 1638- 1688. According to the rules which had been developed under the classic tradition, a tragedy must be written in Alexandrine lines in alternating couplets of masculine and feminine rhymes, and the unities of time, place, and action must be rigorously observed. The subjects of tragedy should be chosen from ancient history, mythology, or legend, and the characters should represent Kings, queens, or others in aristocratic society.

Classical tragedy had a stately dignity and was often filled with beautiful verses and long tirades. Violent so-

tions were not allowed on the stage and the taste of the age had to be treated with a certain elegant and restricted vocabulary. The noble and refined verses were declaimed in a dignified fashion and the aim was to express the great passions that moved the aristocratic characters. The writer of classical tragedies was interested in universals rather than particulars and did not treat the individual characteristics which distinguish particular men. The comedy of the time was distinct from the tragedy and dealt with the vices and difficulties of the lower classes. The rules which governed comedy were less restrictive than those that governed the tragedy and the writers of comedy did not have to submit to the classical rules.

The classical rules were sacred and reflected the tendency of the French mind towards rationalism and abstractions. Infractions of the rules were not tolerated and the mixture of comedy and tragedy was not permitted. Tragedy was merely reflecting the formality and the conventionality of the court of Louis XIV. It must be understood that this type of tragedy was written for the nobility and was very successful; of course, its success was due to the social conditions existing at that time. After all, success usually comes from pleasing one's patrons and the successful dram-

tions were not allowed on the stage and the taste of the
age had to be treated with a certain elegant and restricted
vocabulary. The noble and refined verses were declaimed in a
dignified fashion and the aim was to express the great pas-
sions that moved the aristocratic characters. The writer of
classical tragedies was interested in universals rather than
particulars and did not treat the individual characteristics
which distinguish particular men. The comedy of the time was
distinct from the tragedy and dealt with the vices and dif-
ficulties of the lower classes. The rules which governed
comedy were less restrictive than those that governed the
tragedy and the writers of comedy did not have to submit
to the classical rules.

The classical rules were adored and reflected the tend-
ency of the French mind towards rationalism and abstractions.
Infractions of the rules were not tolerated and the mixture
of comedy and tragedy was not permitted. Tragedy was merely
reflecting the formality and the conventionality of the
court of Louis XIV. It must be understood that this type
of tragedy was written for the nobility and was very suc-
cessful; of course, its success was due to the social con-
ditions existing at that time. After all, success usually
comes from pleasing one's patrons and the successful dram-

atists of the time were those who recognized this fact and were also able to do so. Racine and Corneille, the greatest writers of French classical tragedy, were great poets and also had a more than ordinary talent for the theatre. The lasting qualities of their works attest to its value.

The success of Racine and Corneille dazzled later writers who had less talent and who sought to imitate the masters. The resultant sterility of their works is well- recognized. It was against these rules and the efforts of later writers to imitate the models of the masters that the Préface was aimed.

Let us now take up th e Préface and summarize its demands and then by studying the works and criticisms of the 18th century writers show that these demands had already been made and executed in practice.

In its negative aspects, Romantic tragedy, according to the Préface, would destroy all of the conventionalities which were strangling dramatic art. It was , as has been remarked, a cry for liberty. "Disons-le donc hardiment," Hugo says, "Le temps en est venu, et il serait étrange qu'à cette époque, la liberté, comme la lumière, penetrât partout, excepté dans ce qu'il y a de plus nativement libre au monde, les choses de

la pensee. Mettons le marteau dans les théories; les poétiques et les systèmes. Jetons bas ce vieux plâtrage qui masque la façade de l'art! Il n'y a ni règles ni modèles; ou plutôt il n'y a d'autres règles que les lois générales de la nature, qui planent sur l'art tout entier, et les lois spéciales qui pour chaque composition résultent des conditions propres à chaque sujet."* And, what shall be destroyed first? The unities of time and place! Reality can be obtained only by presenting the exact locality and this is prevented by the unity of place which forbids a change of scene. The unity of time which restricted the action to twenty-four hours is shown to be absurd.

The unity of action alone is necessary. "Il suffirait, enfin," he says, "pour démontrer l'absurdité de la règle des deux unities, d'une dernière raison, prise dans les entrailles de l'art. C'est, l'existence de la troisième unité, l'unité d'action, la seule admise de tous parce qu'elle résulte d'un fait: L'oeil ni l'esprit humain ne sauraient saisir plus d'un ensemble à la fois. Celle-ci est aussi nécessaire que les deux autres sont inutiles. C'est elle qui marque le point de vue du drame; or, par cela même, elle exclut les deux autres."[2] The unity of action alone is to be recognized because of the necessity of concentration in the theatre.

One might spend much time in a discussion of Hugo's history of literary development and his arbitrary division

*Elfinger, p.84
2 Ibid, p.78

la pensée. Mettons le marteau dans les théories; les poétiques et les systèmes. Jetons bas ce vieux plâtrage qui masque la façade de l'art! Il n'y a ni règles ni modèles; ou plutôt il n'y a d'autres règles que les lois générales de la nature, qui planent sur l'art tout entier, et les lois spéciales qui pour chaque composition résultent des conditions propres à chaque sujet."* And, what shall be destroyed first? The unities of time and place! Reality can be obtained only by presenting the exact locality and this is prevented by the unity of place which forbids a change of scene. The unity of time which restricted the action to twenty-four hours is shown to be absurd.

The unity of action alone is necessary. "Il suffirait, enfin," he says, "pour démontrer l'absurdité de la règle des deux unities, d'une dernière raison, prise dans les entrailles de l'art. C'est, l'existence de la troisième unité, l'unité d'action, la seule admise de tous parce qu'elle résulte d'un fait: L'oeil ni l'esprit humain ne sauraient saisir plus d'un ensemble à la fois. Celle-ci est aussi nécessaire que les deux autres sont inutiles. C'est elle qui marque le point de vue du drame; or, par cela même, elle exclut les deux autres."[2] The unity of action alone is to be recognized because of the necessity of concentration in the theatre.

One might spend much time in a discussion of Hugo's history of literary development and his arbitrary division

*Edinger, p.84
[2] Ibid, p.96

of time and ~~their~~ its corresponding poetic types into the following; (1), primitive times (lyric poetry), (2), ancient times (epic poetry), (3), modern times (dramatic poetry); but, it will be necessary to confine our attention to his final remarks on dramatic art. The poetry of our time, being born from Christianity, he maintains, is le drame. The chief characteristic of this type is the real; "le réel résulte de la combinaison toute naturelle de deux types, le sublime et le grotesque, qui se croisent dans le drame comme ils se croisent dans la vie et dans la création."* Christianity, he tells us, had discovered that man had two natures; La bête humaine et l'âme; and, from that day Le drame was created.

Reality, therefore, and not beauty, is to be the basis of the new art. The real results from the natural combination of the sublime and the grotesque which meet in life and in creation. "Les deux types, " he continues, "ainsi isolés et livrés à eux-mêmes s'en iront chacun de leur côté, laissant entre eux le réel, l'un à sa droite, l'autre à sa gauche. D'où il suit qu'après ces abstractions il restera quelque chose à representer, l'homme; après ces tragédies et ces comédies, quelque chose à faire, le drame."[2] The combination of the sublime and the grotesque is one of the most

* Ibid, p. 71
2 Ibid, p. 72

of time and their corresponding poetic types into the following: (1). primitive times (lyric poetry), (2). ancient times (epic poetry), (3). modern times (dramatic poetry); but, it will be necessary to confine our attention to his final remarks on dramatic art. The poetry of our time, being born from Christianity, he maintains, is le drame. The chief characteristic of this type is the real; "le réel résulte de la combinaison toute naturelle de deux types, le sublime et le grotesque, qui se croisent dans le drame comme ils se croisent dans la vie et dans la création."* Christianity, he tells us, had discovered that man had two natures; la bête humaine et l'âme; and, from that day le drame was created.

Reality, therefore, and not beauty, is to be the basis of the new art. The real results from the natural combination of the sublime and the grotesque which meet in life and in creation. "Les deux types," he continues, "ainsi isolés et livrés à eux-mêmes s'en iront chacun de leur côté, laissant entre eux le réel. L'un à sa droite, l'autre à sa gauche. D'où il suit qu'après ces abstractions il restera quelque chose à représenter, l'homme; après ces tragédies et ces comédies, quelque chose à faire, le drame."* The combination of the sublime and the grotesque is one of the most

* Ibid, p. 71
* Ibid, p. 72

essential tenets of the theory of this new type.

The emphasis upon the importance of the real leads to the demands for local color in the new Drame romantique. But, it is not to be only a local color on the surface of the work, but also "dans le coeur même de l'oeuvre, d'où elle se répand au dehors, d'elle-même, naturellement, également, et, pour ainsi parler, dans tous les coins du drame, comme la sève qui monte de la racine à la dernière feuille de l'arbre."*

Hugo was opposed to the use of the coulisses instead of the stage for much of the action. The audience, he says, was only seeing the elbows of the action. He would quicken the action by the elimination of the long tirades and the use of a "vers libre, franc, loyal, osant tout dire sans pruderie, tout exprimer sans recherche;.... tour à tour positif et poétique, tout ensemble artiste et inspiré, profond et soudain, large et vrai ; sachant briser à propos et déplacer la césure pour déguiser sa monotonie d'alexandrin."[2] He would have a verse as beautiful as the prose and enriched by a broader vocabulary; for, although the vocabulary under classical rules is restricted, language itself is not fixed, but rather continually changing.

It would not be necessary, however, to write in verse alone; for, Hugo says..."au reste, que le drame soit écrit

*Ibid, p. 89
2 Ibid, p. 95

essential tenets of the theory of this new type.

The emphasis upon the importance of the real leads to the demands for local color in the new drame romantique. But, it is not to be only a local color on the surface of the work, but also "dans le coeur même de l'oeuvre, d'où elle se répand au dehors, d'elle-même, naturellement, également, et, pour ainsi parler, dans tous les coins du drame, comme la sève qui monte de la racine à la dernière feuille de l'arbre."*

Hugo was opposed to the use of the coulisses instead of the stage for much of the action. The audience, he says, was only seeing the elbows of the action. He would quicken the action by the elimination of the long tirades and the use of a "vers libre, franc, loyal, osant tout dire sans pudeur, tout exprimer sans réticence;.... tour à tour positif et poétique, tout ensemble artiste et inspiré, profond et soudain, large et vrai; sachant briser à propos et déplacer la césure pour déguiser sa monotonie d'alexandrin."* He would have a verse as beautiful as the prose and enriched by a broader vocabulary; for, although the vocabulary under classical rules is restricted, language itself is not fixed, but rather continually changing.

It would not be necessary, however, to write in verse alone; for, Hugo says..."un reste, que le drame doit écrit

*Ibid, p.89
2 Ibid, p.95

en prose ce n'est là qu'une question secondaire. Le rang d'un ouvrage doit se fixer, non d'après sa forme, mais d' apres sa valeur intrinsèque. Il n'y a qu'un poids qui puisse faire pencher la balance de l'art, c'est le génie."* But, Hugo being primarily a poet favors the use of verse; for, he says, " l'idée, trempée dans le vers, prend soudain quelque chose de plus incisif et de plus éclatant. Cést le fer qui devient acier."

In conclusion, he tells us that "le drame romantique broierait et mêlerait artistement ces deux èspèces de plaisir (sérieux et folâtre). Il ferait passer à chaque instant l'auditoire du sérieux au rire, des excitations bouffonnes aux émotions déchirantes, du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère."[2] It would be the union of the grotesque with the sublime, "l'âme sous le corps, c'est une tragédie sous une comédie."[3] This mélange des genres was to be its outstanding characteristic. But before this could be achieved it would be necessary to destroy le vieux faux goût which had been developed during the preceding century.

*Ibid, p.97
2 Ibid, p.100
3 Ibid, p.101

en prose ce n'est là qu'une question secondaire. Le rang d'un ouvrage doit se fixer, non d'après sa forme, mais d'apres sa valeur intrinsèque. Il n'y a qu'un poids quin puisse faire pencher la balance de l'art, c'est le génie."* But, Hugo being primarily a poet favors the use of verse; for, he says, " l'idée, trempée dans le vers, prend soudain quelque chose de plus incisif et de plus éclatant. C'est le fer qui devient acier."

In conclusion, he tells us that "le drame romantique broierait et mêlerait artistement ces deux espèces de plaisir (sérieux et folâtre). Il ferait passer à chaque instant l'auditoire du sérieux au rire, des excitations bouffonnes aux émotions déchirantes, du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère."[2] It would be the union of the grotesque with the sublime, "l'âme sous le corps, c'est une tragédie sous une comédie."[3] This mélange des genres was to be its outstanding characteristic. But before this could be achieved it would be necessary to destroy le vieux faux goût which had been developed during the preceding century.

*Ibid, p.97
2 Ibid, p.100
3 Ibid, p.101

During the last years of the 17th century and the first years of the 18th century, there had arisen a host of dramatists who sought to acheive success by following the old master, Racine. But, imitators rarely succeed - one must have some genius of his own. These lesser lights had none- of course, some were capable versificateurs, but none had any real dramatic insight. Racine had been able to obtain a striking unity of penetrating psychological truth and a noble setting; but, his successors had neither his elegance of style nor his gift of portraying psychological reality. French classical tragedy was dying, but the last illness was to be one that lingered on for more than a century.

One of the first to have realized the fact that French classical tragedy was beginning to lose its appeal to the audiences of the 18th century was Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon Although he accepted without question the rules of classical tragedy and although his subjects were chosen from antiquity, he felt that something additional was needed to reinvigorate that type of dramatic art. He was the first to bring back to the French stage the various elements which are grouped under the heading of le romanesque. The motivating force of his tragedies and their development depend upon disguises, mistaken identities, recognitions, abductions, and the like.

During the last years of the 17th century and the first years of the 18th century, there had arisen a host of dramatists who sought to achieve success by following the old master, Racine. But, imitators rarely succeed - one must have some genius of his own. These lesser lights had none- of course, some were capable verse technicians, but none had any real dramatic insight. Racine had been able to obtain a striking unity of penetrating psychological truth and a noble setting; but, his successors had neither his elegance of style nor his gift of portraying psychological reality. French classical tragedy was dying, but the last illness was to be one that lingered on for more than a century.

One of the first to have realized the fact that French classical tragedy was beginning to lose its appeal to the audiences of the 18th century was Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon Although he accepted without question the rules of classical tragedy and although his subjects were chosen from antiquity, he felt that something additional was needed to reinvigorate that type of dramatic art. He was the first to bring back to the French stage the various elements which are stressed under the heading of la romanesque. The motivating force of his tragedies and their development depend upon disguises, mistaken identities, recognitions, abductions, and the like.

Most of his plays contain cases of disguise and recognition. Crébillon employs these devices to complicate the hitherto simple form of classical tragedy.

Crébillon's characters are no longer moved by reason; their actions depend upon incidents and the emphasis has been shifted from the universals to particular details and spectacular effects. He was also responsible for the introduction of terror in the tragedy. His aim was to produce pity and he did not desire to offend his public, but the audiences were too sensible to fully tolerate his innovations. Crébillon had no intentions of destroying classical tragedy; but, we shall see that it was the development of the romanesque which he had introduced that eventually found its way into Romantic drama through the medium of the melodrama.

A contemporary of Crebillon's, Houdar de la Motte, a timid poet but an outspoken critic, after having followed the classical rules for the first forty years of his life, decided that servile imitation was responsible for the deplorable condition of tragedy. He was one of those "esprits universels" of the 18th century- a man who found time for a variety of intellectual pursuits. He set about to write a systematic criticism of tragedy and to point out its deficiencies and ailments.

Most of his plays contain cases of disguise and recognition. Crébillon employs these devices to complicate the hitherto simple form of classical tragedy.

Crébillon's characters are no longer moved by reason; their actions depend upon incidents and the emphasis has been shifted from the universals to particular details and spectacular effects. He was also responsible for the introduction of terror in the tragedy. His aim was to produce pity and he did not desire to offend his public, but the audiences were too sensible to fully tolerate his innovations. Crébillon had no intentions of destroying classical tragedy; but, we shall see that it was the development of the romanesque which he had introduced that eventually found its way into Romantic drama through the medium of the melodrama.

A contemporary of Crebillon's, Houdar de la Motte, a timid poet but an outspoken critic, after having followed the classical rules for the first forty years of his life, decided that servile imitation was responsible for the deplorable condition of tragedy. He was one of those "esprits universels" of the 18th century - a man who found time for a variety of intellectual pursuits. He set about to write a systematic criticism of tragedy and to point out its deficiencies and ailments

This work, Discours sur la Tragedie, in four volumes contains his ideaes on dramatic art.

He rejects the unities and shows their unreasonableness and that one can write an excellent tragedy while violating all of the unities. He condemns the simplicity of action and the prevalence of the vague and impersonal love found in classical tragedy. The long, monotonous monologues, the "récits insipides" and the presence of the "confidentes" who have no part in the action are severely criticized.

The arbitrary rules established by an unquestioning criticism and consecrated by an inveterate admiration and a blind superstition are condemned. The unities, in his opinion, are only " des principes de fantaisie."* He was particularly opposed to the unities of place and time. He was essentially a rationalist and he, therefore, could find no justification for the existing rules. He saw that the existing tragedy did not fit with a society which was rapidly changing; and, he understood that it would be necessary to create a dramatic form which would have more movement and liberty.

Verse, he maintained, is not the medium of expression for tragedy. Prejudice alone prevents the presentation of tragedies written in prose, "le langage naturel de la passion."[2]

*Discours sur la Tragédie, p.39, Vol. IV

2 Ibid, p.392

This work, Discours sur la Tragedie, in four volumes contains his ideaes on dramatic art.

He rejects the unities and shows their unreasonableness and that one can write an excellent tragedy while violating all of the unities. He condemns the simplicity of action and the prevalence of the vague and impersonal love found in classical tragedy. The long, monotonous monologues, the "récits insipides" and the presence of the "confidente" who have no part in the action are severely criticized.

The arbitrary rules established by an unquestioning criticism and consecrated by an inveterate admiration and a blind superstition are condemned. The unities, in his opinion, are only " des principes de fantaisie." He was particularly opposed to the unities of place and time. He was essentially a rationalist and he, therefore, could find no justification for the existing rules. He saw that the existing tragedy did not fit with a society which was rapidly changing; and, he understood that it would be necessary to create a dramatic form which would have more movement and liberty.

Verse, he maintained, is not the medium of expression for tragedy. Prejudice alone prevents the presentation of tragedies written in prose, "le langage naturel de la passion."

* Discours sur la Tragédie, p.39, vol. IV
2 I bid, p.42

He believes that the author should devote the time spent in riming in trying to perfect his work by animating and invigorating it and by correcting the style."Ainsi," he concludes, " la voie sera ouverte a beaucoup d'écrivains, très capables de composer une tragédie, incapables de la versifier comme il faut."

His chief contribution to dramatic theory was his development of the spectacle based on the opéra and the substitution of the unity of interest for the unity of action. His preference for a multiplicity of events in the tragedy is based on this unity of interest. Action, he felt, was the necessary essential, and he says,* la plupart de nos tragédies ne sont que des dialogus et des récits." His ideas on the unity of interest lead one to believe that it is similar to the discarded unity of action.

For him, tragedy has only one necessary object and that is to please. Pleasure being the aim of dramatic poetry, he feels that the resultant pleasure is worth far more than all of the rules observed. Do you ask why this man is comparatively unknown and why none of his works have lived on? Well, like many another hardy critic, he was a cautious dramatist. He broke very few rules in his own works and one can give as his reason his central aim-- pleasure. He was fully cognizant of the fact that the people of his day were not

* Ibid p. 396
2 Ibid p. 83

the fact that the people of his day were not
reason his central aim-- pleasure. He was fully cognizant of
broke very few rules in his own works and one can give as his
many another hardy critic, he was a cautious dramatist. He
ly unknown and why none of his works have lived on? Well, like
of the rules observed. Do you ask why this man is comparative-
feels that the resultant pleasure is worth far more than all
is to please. Pleasure being the aim of dramatic poetry, he
For him, tragedy has only one necessary object and that

the discarded unity of action.
unity of interest lead one to believe that it is similar to
ne sont que des dialogues et des récits." His ideas on the
necessary essential, and he says,"A la plupart de nos tragédies
is based on this unity of interest. Action, he felt, was the
His preference for a multiplicity of events in the tragedy
stitution of the unity of interest for the unity of action.
velopment of the spectacle based on the opéra and the sub-
His chief contribution to dramatic theory was his de-

verifier comme il faut."
très capables de composer une tragédie, incapables de la
conclues, " la voie sera ouverte à beaucoup d'écrivains,
invigorating it and by correcting the style."Ainsi," he
in timing in trying to perfect his work by animating and
He believes that the author should devote the time spent

yet prepared for the type of tragedy that he advocated and that if he was to please them he would have to obey the rules. Andso he did! But let us remember him for the value of his critical work in the later development of dramatic theory and that he was one of the first to advocate the rejection of the unities.

Nivelle de la Chaussée(1692-1754), the inventor of the comédie larmoyante, increased the emphasis of the pathetic and the romanesque that was introduced by Crébillon . His greatest contribution to the destruction of the classical tragedy was the mélange des genres; but, one must remember that he was primarily a writer of comedy who saw the advantage of adding a tragic element to that type. We have seen the importance of the mélange des genres in the doctrines of Hugo. The use of Bourgeois characters and the appeal to the emotions was later taken up by Diderot and his disciples. Lanson has called la comédie larmoyante," la tragédie sans poésie et sans tragique;"* and, it is true that they do not contain any of the elements of classical tragedy. His comedies are social and moral treatises and their success was due to the support of the wo men of the time; for,

*Histoire de la Tragédie Française, p. 154

Yet prepared for the type of tragedy that he advocated and that if he was to please them he would have to obey the rules. Andso he did! But let us remember him for the value of his critical work in the later development of dramatic theory and that he was one of the first to advocate the rejection of the unities.

Nivelle de la Chaussée(1692-1754), the inventor of the comédie larmoyante, increased the emphasis of the pathetic and the romanesque that was introduced by Crebillon . His greatest contribution to the destruction of the classical tragedy was the mélange des genres;but, one must remember that he was primarily a writer of comedy who saw the advantage of adding a tragic element to that type. We have seen the importance of the mélange des genres in the doctrines of Hugo. The use of bourgeois characters and the appeal to the emotions was later taken up by Diderot and his disciples. Lenson has called la comédie larmoyante," la tragédie sans poésie et sans tragique;"* and, it is true that they do not contain any of the elements of classical tragedy. His comedies are social and moral treatises and their success was due to the support of the wo men of the time; for,

*Histoire de la Tragédie Française, p.152

he knew how to make them weep and that was their desire. He created such a vogue for this type that even Voltaire, jealous of the success of this mediocre writer, also wrote several works of this type.

Voltaire is often called the dominant figure of French classical tragedy of the 18th century. Fifty-two dramatic works came from his pen between 1718 and the year of his death, 1778. It is common knowledge that Voltaire helped greatly to bring about the downfall of the existing social and political order; but, in the realm of tragedy he is usually regarded as a steadfast follower of the classical traditions.

And yet, one can gather from a study of some of Voltaire's prefaces and plays much dramatic theory that is considered the property of the Romantics. It is well to recognize that his ideas are not contained in any single system; for, they seemed to hover between those obtained in England and those that came from his classical training. Vacillation marks his ideas in this realm and some might be tempted to call him an opportunist who shifted his views with the current popular changes. In those plays, prefaces, épîtres, and other works that he signed he was usually classic; but, in the works that he published under pseudonyms or anonymously, we find him combatting for

Voltaire is often called the dominant figure of French classical tragedy of the 18th century. Fifty-two dramatic works came from his pen between 1718 and the year of his death, 1778. It is common knowledge that Voltaire helped greatly to bring about the downfall of the existing social and political order; but, in the realm of tragedy he is usually regarded as a steadfast follower of the classical traditions.

And yet, one can gather from a study of some of Voltaire's prefaces and plays much dramatic theory that is considered the property of the Romantics. It is well to recognize that his ideas are not contained in any single system; for, they seemed to hover between those obtained in England and those that came from his classical training. Vacillation marks his ideas in this realm and some might be tempted to call him an opportunist who shifted his views with the current popular changes. In those plays, prefaces, epîtres, and other works that he signed he was usually classic; but, in the works that he published under pseudonyms or anonymously, we find him combatting for

innovations in dramatic art.

Before his exile to England, Voltaire was quite closely attached to the classical traditions. He had received his scholastic training under the Jesuits; he, therefore, had strong classical leanings. In his youth he was enthusiastic over the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine. In his first two tragedies, (Oedipe, 1718; Mariamne, 1725) he followed the old classical traditions. But, upon his return from England we note a change in the tone of his remarks on tragedy; for, in 1730, in the Préface de Brutus, he writes: "Nous avons en France des tragédies estimées qui sont plutôt des conversations qu'elles ne sont la représentation d'un événement. Notre délicatesse excessive nous force quelque fois à mettre en récit ce que nous voudrions exposer aux yeux. Nous craignons de hasarder sur la scène des spectacles nouveaux devant une nation accoutumée à tourner en ridicule ce qui n'est pas d'usage."

Voltaire, in England, had discovered Shakespeare and this discovery had a tremendous influence upon his dramatic ideas. He now realized the necessity of action in the tragedy. In the Discours à lord Bolingbroke, he again points out the fact that plays like Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Otway's La Venise sauvée, etc., would be impossible in France because of the long récits, the construction of the theatres, and the presence

innovations in dramatic art.

Before his exile to England, Voltaire was quite close-
ly attached to the classical traditions. He had received
his scholastic training under the Jesuits; he, therefore, had
strong classical leanings. In his youth he was enthusiastic
over the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine. In his first
two tragedies, (Oedipe, 1718; Mariamne, 1725) he followed the
old classical traditions. But, upon his return from England
we note a change in the tone of his remarks on tragedy; for,
in 1730, in the Préface de Brutus, he writes: "Nous avons
on Francoedes tragédies estimées qui sont plutôt des conver-
sations qu'elles ne sont la représentation d'un événement.
Notre délicatesse excessive nous force quelque fois à mettre
en récit ce que nous voudrions exposer aux yeux. Nous crai-
gnons de hasarder sur la scène des spectacles nouveaux de-
vant une nation accoutumée à tourner en ridicule ce qui n'est
pas d'usage."

Voltaire, in England, had discovered Shakespeare and this
discovery had a tremendous influence upon his dramatic ideas.
He now realized the necessity of action in the tragedy. In
the Discours à Lord Bolingbroke, he again points out the fact
that plays like Shakespeare's Jules Cesaer, Otway's La Venise
sauvée, etc., would be impossible in France because of the
long récits, the construction of the theatres, and the presence

of spectators on the stage. He pointed out the timidity of the French audiences and asked why it was possible to commit suicide on the stage but impossible to kill another person In the same Discours, he expresses the wish that more speaking characters come on the stage. The influence of Shakespeare and England may be recognized by listing some of the tragedis that he wrote in the period immediately following his return; Brutus,1730(Roman tragedies of Shakespeare); Zaire,1732,(Othello); La Mort dé César,1743,(Julius Caesar); Alzire,1736,(Southerné's Oroonoko).

In the Préface de l'Enfant prodigue, he points out the nbcessity"d'avoir des choses nouvelles.Si l'on avait toujours mis sur le théâtre tragique la grandeur romaine à la fin on s'en serait rébuté; si les héros ne parlaient jamais que de tendresse, on serait affadi." He was one of the first to put French characters on the stage and one of the first to use the Middle Ages as a fertile field for the tragedy instead of the lore of antiquity. And, was not the return to mediavelism one of the tenets of the Romantics?

And, again in the same Préface,he commends the mélange des genres: "Si la comédie doit être la représentation des moeurs, cette piece semble être assez de ce caractère. On y voit un mélange de sérieux et de plaisanterie, de comique et de touchant. Souvent même une seule aventure produit tous ces contrastes. Rien n'est si commun qu'une maison dans laquelle

of spectators on the stage. He pointed out the timidity of the French audiences and asked why it was possible to commit suicide on the stage but impossible to kill another person. In the same Discourse, he expresses the wish that more speaking characters come on the stage. The influence of Shakespeare and England may be recognized by listing some of the tragedies that he wrote in the period immediately following his return: Brutus,1730(Roman tragedies of Shakespeare); Zaire,1732,(Othello); La Mort de César,1743,(Julius Caesar); Alzire,1736,(Bourbon's Oroonoko).

In the Préface de L'Enfant prodigue, he points out the necessity"d'avoir des choses nouvelles.Si l'on avait toujours mis sur le théâtre tragique la grandeur tomsing à la fin on s'en serait rebuté; si les héros ne parlaient jamais que de tendresse, on serait effadi." He was one of the first to put French characters on the stage and one of the first to use the Middle Ages as a fertile field for the tragedy instead of the love of anti uity. And, was not the return to mediavalism one of the tenets of the Romantics?

And, again in the same Préface,he commends the mélange des genres: "Si la comédie doit être la représentation des moeurs, cette pièce semble être assez de ce caractère. On y voit un mélange de sérieux et de plaisanterie, de comique et de tonchant. Souvent même une seule aventure produit tous ces contrastes. Rien n'est si commun qu'une maison dans laquelle

un pere gronde, une fille occupee de sa passion pleure, le fils se moque des deux, et quelques parents prennent différement part à la scene..... il ne faut donner l'excellence à aucun genre; et, si l'on me demandait quel genre est le meilleur, je répondrais: Celui qui est le mieux traité.... Tous les genres sont bons hors le genre ennuyeux." The mélange des genres, we recall was the keynote of the positive doctrines formulated in the Préface de Cromwell.

Voltaire had, at one time, a rather heated controversy with Nivelle de la Chaussée, the founder of the comédie larmoyante, about the propriety of that type. However, as we have already seen above in the Préface de l'Enfant prodigue we may again note his acceptance of this type in the Préface de Nanine. It is permissible, he says, to compose" des comédies attrendrissantes." He tries to make a rather subtle distinction between larmoyante and attrendrissante; however, one feels that having seen that la Chaussée's works were proving successful, Voltaire would also write works of that type. He says in this Préface; " la comédie peut attrendrir, pourvu qu'ensuite elle fasse rire les honnêtes gens. Si elle manquait de comique, si elle n'était que larmoyante, c'est alors qu'elle serait un genre très vicieux et très desagreable."

Again in the Préface de Nanine, we find already expressed Hugo's theory of the sublime and the grotesque. "On avoue," he says, "qu'il est rare de faire passer les spectateurs insen-

Voltaire had, at one time, a rather heated controversy with Nivelle de la Chaussée, the founder of the comédie larmoyante, about the propriety of that type. However,as we have already seen above in the Préface de l'Enfant prodigue we may again note his acceptance of this type in the Préface de Nanine. It is permissible, he says, to compose" des comédies attendrissantes." He tries to make a distinction between larmoyante and attendrissante; however, one feels that having seen that la Chaussée's works were proving successful,Voltaire would also write works of that type. He says in this Préface; " la comédie peut attendrir, pourvu qu'ensuite elle fasse rire les honnêtes gens. Si elle manquait de comique, si elle n'était que larmoyante, c'est alors qu'elle serait un genre très vicieux et très dangereux."

Again in the Préface de Nanine,we find already expressed Hugo's theory of the sublime and the grotesque. "On avoue,"he says, "qu'il est rare de faire passer les spectateurs insen-

siblement de l'attrendrissement au rire; mais ce passage tout difficile qu'il est de le saisir dans une comédie, n'est pas moins naturel aux hommes. On a dejà remarqué ailleurs que rien n'est plus ordinaire que des aventures qui affligent l'âme et dont certaines circonstances inspirent ensuite une gaieté passagère. C'est ainsi malheureusement que le genre humain est fait... On voit souvent jusque dans l'horreur des batailles,des incendies, de tous les désastres qui nous affligent, qu'une naïvete, un bon mot excitent le rire jusque dans le sein de la désolation et de la pitié."

In the Preface of l'Écossaise(written anonymously and supposed to be a translation from the work of an Englishman Mr. Hume) but actually written by Voltaire), we again find a remarkable likeness to an important doctrine expressed in the Préface de Cromwell. Voltaire says: "Il n'importe aux Anglais que le sujet soit bas, pourvu qu'il soit vrai. Ils disent que la comédie étend sur toutes les conditions; que tout ce qui est dans la nature doit être peint."* Voltaire gives this as the English doctrine, but he himself had followed it in this play and we find when the play is anonymous, he expresses doctrines which bear a remarkable resemblance to those of Victor Hugo. In the Préface de Cromwell, we find the following: "Car la poésie vraie, la poésie complète, est dans l'harmonie des contraires. Puis, il est temps de le dire

*Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. 5, p. 410

In the Preface of *L'Ecossaise* (written anonymously and supposed to be a translation from the work of an Englishman Mr. Hume) but actually written by Voltaire), we again find a remarkable likeness to an important doctrine expressed in the *Préface de Cromwell*. Voltaire says: "Il n'importe aux Anglais que le sujet soit bas, pourvu qu'il soit vrai. Ils disent que la comédie étend sur toutes les conditions; que *tout ce qui est dans la nature doit être peint*." Voltaire gives this as the English doctrine, but he himself had followed it in this play and we find when the play is anonymous, he expresses doctrines which bear a remarkable resemblance to those of Victor Hugo. In the *Préface de Cromwell*, we find the following: "Car la poésie vraie, la poésie complète, est dans l'harmonieux contraires. Puis, il est temps de le dire

hautement, et c'est ici surtout que les exceptions confirmeraient la règle, tout ce qui est dans la Nature est dans l'Art."

In the Préface de Socrate, Voltaire again discusses the mélange des genres.(This time under the pseudonym of M. Fatem of Holland)His object in this piece, he says,"c'est de faire, en un mot de cette pièce une de ces représentations naïves de la vie humaine, un de ces tableaux où l'on peint toutes les conditions. Cette entreprise n'est pas sans difficulté, et quoique le sublime continu soit d'un genre infiniment supérieur, ce mélange du pathétique et du familier à son merite."*

In the Préface of les Guèbres, he discusses the use of characters other than princes and kings,"Pour mieux parvenir à jeter dans les esprits les semences de ces vertus nécessaire à toute societe, on a choisi des personnages dans l'ordre commun. On n'a pas craint d'hasarder sur la scène un jardinier, une jeune fille qui a prêté la main aux travaux rustiques de son père; des officiers, dont l'un commande dans une petite place frontière et dont l'autre est lieutenant dans la compagnie de son frère; enfin, un des acteurs est un simple soldat. De tels personnages, qui se rapprochent de la nature, et la simplicité du style qui leur convient, ont paru devoir faire plus d'impression, et mieux concourer au but proposé, que des princes amoureux et des princesses passionnées: les

*Ibid, p.362

rieur, ce mélange du pathétique et du familier à son mérite."*

quoique le sublime continu soit d'un genre infiniment supé-

conditions. Cette entreprise n'est pas sans difficulté, et

la vie humaine, un de ces tableaux où l'on peint toutes les

en un mot de cette pièce une de ces représentations naïves de

of Holland)His object in this piece, he says,"c'est de faire,

mélange des genres.(This time under the pseudonym of M. Tatem

In the Préface de Socrate, Voltaire again discusses the

Art."

traient la règle, tout ce qui est dans la Nature est dans l'

bautement, et c'est ici surtout que les exceptions confirme-

théâtres ont assez retenti de ces aventures tragiques qui ne se passent qu'entre des souverains, et qui sont de peu d'utilité pour le reste des hommes." * Here, we see Voltaire striking a blow at one of the strongholds of classical traditions: the use of kings, queens, and other characters of high rank. But, let us not forget that Diderot had already posited his theories of le drame bourgeois, and that Sedaine had produced the masterpiece of that genre, Le Philosophe sans le savoir(1765). (Voltaire wrote les Guèbresin 1769)

In Saül,(a pretended prose translation and published anonymously) Voltaire fails to observe the unities. In a note, he tells us: On n'a pas observé, dans cette espece de tragi-comédie, l'unité d'action, de lieu, et de temps. On a cru avec l'illustre la Motte, devoir se soustraire à ces regles. Tout se passe dans l'intervalle de deux ou trois generations, pour rendre l'action plus tragique par le nombre des morts, selon l'esprit juif;tandis que parmis nous l'unité de temps ne peut s'étendre qu'à vingt-quatre heures et l'unité de lieu que dans l'enceinte d'un palais." Again when he hides under a pseudonym, Voltaire violates the rules and stands with the "illustre laMotte", who advocated the violation of the unities; however, when he signs his works he usually preserves the unities.

But even in his signed plays we find increasing indi-

* Ibid, Vol. III, p.491

théâtres ont assez retenti de ces aventures tragiques qui ne se passent qu'entre des souverains, et qui sont de peu d'utilité pour le reste des hommes." Here, we see Voltaire striking a blow at one of the strongholds of classical traditions: the use of kings, queens, and other characters of high rank. But, let us not forget that Diderot had already posited his theories of le drame bourgeois, and that Sedaine had produced the masterpiece of that genre, Le Philosophe sans le savoir(1765). (Voltaire wrote les Guébresin 1769)

In Saül,(a pretended prose translationand published anonymously) Voltaire fails to observe the unities. In a note, he tells us: On n'a pas observé, dans cette espece de tragi-comédie, l'unité d'action, de lieu, et de temps. On a cru avec l'illustre la Motte, devoir se soustraire à ces regles. Tout se passe dans l'intervalle de deux ou trois generations, pour rendre l'action plus tragique par le nombre des morts, selon l'esprit juif; tandis que parmis nous l'unité de temps ne peut s'étendre qu'à vingt-quatre heures et l'unité de lieu que dans l'enceinte d'un palais." Again when he hides under a pseudonym, Voltaire violates the rules and stands with the "illustre laMotte", who advocated the violation of the unities; however, when he signs his works he usually preserves the unities.

But even in his signed plays we find increasing indi-

*Ibid, Vol. XI, p.47.

cations of dramatic innovations. In Sémiramis,(1749), for example, Voltaire timidly abandons the unity of place several times. In the first and second acts the scene is described as follows: "Le théâtre représente un vaste peristyle, au fond duquel est le palais de Sémiramis. Les jardins en terrasses sont élevés au-dessus du palais. Le temple des Mages est à droite; et un mausolée à gauche orné d'obélisques." At the beginning of the third act, we note that ,"Le théâtre représente un cabinet du palais."[2] And, then something heretofore unattempted in French tragedy, there is a complete change in the seventh scene of the same act,for we note that" le palais où était Sémiramis fait place à un grand salon magnifiquement orné. Plusieurs officiers, avec les marques de leurs dignites, sontsurdes gradins. Un trone est placé au milieu du salon. Le grand-prêtre entre....."[3]And then the tomb of Ninas should be seen in the background for the following action takes place there. This change of scene in the middle of an act was a most revolutionary innovation. In Mahomet(1744) Voltaire abandons the unity of place to some extent. The first act is in an oriental vestibule; the second act,however, is apparently in a prison for Palmyre says to Séide: "Dans ma prison cruelle est-ce un dieu qui te guide?" and the third act is back in the vestibule.This play is very artificial in construction and is really a philosophical piece.

*Ibid, vol.III, p.507
2 Ibid, vol.III p.533
3 Ibid, vol.III p.540

sections of dramatic innovations. In Sémiramis (1749), for example, Voltaire timidly abandons the unity of place several times. In the first and second acts the scene is described as follows: "Le théâtre représente un vaste peristyle, au fond duquel est le palais de Sémiramis. Les jardins en terrasses sont élevés au-dessus du palais. Le temple des Mages est à droite; et un mausolée à gauche orné d'obéliques." At the beginning of the third act, we note that "Le théâtre représente un cabinet du palais." And, then something heretofore unattempted in French tragedy, there is a complete change in the seventh scene of the same act, for we note that" le palais où était Sémiramis fait place à un grand salon magnifiquement orné. Plusieurs officiers, avec les marques de leurs dignités, sont assis de chaque côté. Un trône est placé au milieu du salon. Le grand-prêtre entre....."And then the tomb of Ninus should be seen in the background for the following action takes place there. This change of scene in the middle of an act was a most revolutionary innovation. In Mahomet (1742) Voltaire abandons the unity of place to some extent. The first act is in an oriental vestibule; the second act, however, is apparently in a prison for Palmyre says to Séide: "Dans ma prison sinistre est-ce un dieu qui te guide?" and the third act is back in the vestibule. This play is very artificial in construction and is really a philosophical piece.

*Tr&Cr, Vol.III, p.297
Z Cr&Cr, Vol.IV p.313
Brock, Vol.II p.340

Among the numerous adjectives tha t have been applied to Romanticism in literature, the term exoticism has found frequent use. Voltaire was one of the first to employ subject matter of an exotic nature in French tragedy. We find Chinese, English, Arabiann, Peruvian, and Persian characters in his plays. Voltaire, more than any other French dramatist of the 18th century, furthered the cause of historical accuracy in costumes and in settings. For example, in l'Orphelin de la Chine(1755), Voltaire used a palace decorated according to Chinese taste. This, indeed, was as eventful as the suppression of the banquettes and the spectators on the stage in 1759; Voltaire's efforts were largely responsible for this reform. He was ever endeavoring to obtain as much local color as possible.

The clearing of the stage enabled him to obtain the spectacular effects with which he hoped to invigorate the tragedy. In La Mort de César he brought the crowd upon the stage in order to produce a realistic effect. He continued the use of the various elements of the romanesque, and far outstripped Crébillon in the matter of innovations. He brought on the stage , murders, marriages, duels, gallows, poisonings, sacrifices, etc. Tragedy was becoming more than a lengthy conversation; for, visual representation by means of tableaux was the method that Voltaire was using to eliminate the long

Among the numerous adjectives that have been applied to Romanticism in literature, the term exoticism has found frequent use. Voltaire was one of the first to employ subject matter of an exotic nature in French tragedy. We find Chinese, English, Arabian, Peruvian, and Persian characters in his plays. Voltaire, more than any other French dramatist of the 18th century, furthered the cause of historical accuracy in costumes and in settings. For example, in L'Orphelin de la Chine(1755), Voltaire used a palace decorated according to Chinese taste. This, indeed, was as eventful as the suppression of the banquettes and the spectators on the stage in 1759; Voltaire's efforts were largely responsible for this reform. He was ever endeavoring to obtain as much local color as possible.

The clearing of the stage enabled him to obtain the spectacular effects with which he hoped to invigorate the tragedy. In La Mort de César he brought the crowd upon the stage in order to produce a realistic effect. He continued the use of the various elements of the romanesque, and far outstripped Crébillon in the matter of innovations. He brought on the stage , murders, marriages, duels, gallows, poisonings, sacrifices,etc. Tragedy was becoming more than a lengthy conversation; for, visual representation by means of tableaux was the method that Voltaire was using to eliminate the long

récits. The costumes, the mise en scène, and the settings greatly increased in importance. Voltaire took the action out of the coulisses and brought it on the stage long before the time of Victor Hugo. For example, in Mahomet, Zopire is killed by Séide-- in Sémiramis, the wedding ceremony takes place on the stage-- and in Rome sauvée, the Senate is assembled on the stage and Aurelius dies in the Senate.

Voltaire's use of the romanesque led him far along the road to melodrama and the Romantic drama. In Tancrède, for example, we find the use of a billet de sang which must have been a decided innovation for the 18th century audiences; Dumas in La Tour de Nesle, makes a similar use of a billet de sang. In Alzire, Mahomet, and Tancrède, the use of disguises and recognitions resembles the methods of the later popular melodramatists. Alzire, ou les Américains, if written in prose would resemble much of the work of Alexandre Dumas; it is but a novel put into action and verse.

Voltaire's ideas on dramatic art seem to be a mixture of timid breaking away from classical traditions and the complete disregard for those traditions and a demand for innovations. A further demonstration of his vacillating ideas may be obtained when one recalls that it was he who introduced Shakespeare to France and then later called him "le barbare du nord." One must remember that Voltaire was not only a writer, but an act-

must remember that Voltaire was not only a writer, but an act-
to France and then later called him "le barbare du nord." One
ed when one recalls that it was he who introduced Shakespeare
A further demonstration of his vacillating ideas may be obtain-
disregard for those traditions and a demand for innovations.
timid breaking away from classical traditions and the complete
Voltaire's ideas on dramatic art seem to be a mixture of
a novel put into action and verse.

would resemble much of the work of Alexandre Dumas; it is but
dramatists. Alzire, ou les Américains, if written in prose
recognitions resembles the methods of the later popular melo-
In Alzire, Mahomet, and Tancrède, the use of disguises and
in La Tour de Nesle, makes a similar use of a billet de sang.
been a decided innovation for the 18th century audiences; Dumas
example, we find the use of a billet de sang which must have
road to melodrama and the Romantic drama. In Tancrède, for
Voltaire's use of the romanesque led him far along the

bledon the stage and Aurelius dies in the Senate.
place on the stage-- and in Rome sauvée, the Senate is assem-
is killed by Séide-- in Sémiramis, the wedding ceremony takes
the time of Victor Hugo. For example, in Mahomet, Zopire
out of the coulisses and brought on the stage long before
greatly increased in importance. Voltaire took the action
récits. The costumes, the mise en scène, and the settings

or, director and also a builder of theatres; and, being a shrewd business man, he was ever watchful of new changes that would increase the popularity of his productions. In the last years of his life, he recognized his own influence in aiding in the overthrow of classical tragedy and wrote; "Hélas, j'ai moi-même amené la décadence, en introduisant l'appareil et le spectacle. Les pantomimes emportent aujourd'hui sur la raison et la poésie." Voltaire's tragedies, as has been noted, come very close to the melodrama at times; for, he was not a great poet and he had to depend on action and spectacle for the interest. The use of philosophical tirades and the references to his contemporaries also connect him with the Romantic drama.

Voltaire was, therefore, one of the precursors of that dramatic revolution which developed the Romantic drama. It is not probable that he wished to be regarded as such; but, very often one takes part in revolutions without wishing to do so or is responsible for startling innovations without having sensed their significance . Deschanel points out the chief influence in directing Voltaire away from the classical traditions when he states that ,"Ce fut l'étincelle exotique u qui alluma en lui l'esprit de liberté. C'est à Shakespeare qu'il doit le plus, comme le théâtre romantique de nos jours. Non plus que celui-ci, il n'aime pas à se vanter ses emprunts"[2]

And finally, may we not agree with Victorien Sardou, who in speaking of Voltaire's contributions said that,"En nous en-

* Dramatic Theory and Practice, Jourdain, p. 62
2 Le Romantisme des Classiques, Cinquième Séries, p. 419

or, director and also a builder of theatres; and, being a shrewd business man, he was ever watchful of new changes that would increase the popularity of his productions. In the last years of his life, he recognized his own influence in aiding in the overthrow of classical tragedy and wrote; "Hélas, j'ai moi-même amené la décadence, en introduisant l'appareil et le spectacle. Les pantomimes emportent aujourd'hui sur la raison et la poésie." Voltaire's tragedies, as has been noted, come very close to the melodrams at times; for, he was not a great poet and he had to depend on action and spectacle for the interest. The use of philosophical tirades and the references to his contemporaries also connect him with the Romantic drama.

Voltaire was, therefore, one of the precursors of that dramatic revolution which developed the Romantic drama. It is not probable that he wished to be regarded as such; but, very often one takes part in revolutions without wishing to do so or is responsible for starting innovations without having sensed their significance . Descharmel points out the chief influence in directing Voltaire away from the classical traditions when he states that ,"Ce fut l'étincelle exotique qui allume en lui l'esprit de liberté. C'est à Shakespeare qu'il doit le plus, comme le théâtre romantique de nos jours. Non plus que celui-ci, il n'aime pas à se vautrer ses emportements."[2]

And finally, may we not agree with Victorien Sardou, who in speaking of Voltaire's contributions said that,"En nous en-

[2] Pamela Theory and Practice, Jameson, p. 62.
La Renaissance des Classiques, Descharmel, Étienne p. 419

seignant avec le drame Shakespérien à ne plus nous renfermer dans l'admiration exclusive des anciens, à nous affranchir des règles tyranniques, à briser le moule étroite qui comprimait l'expansion de notre art national, en nous apprenant enfin à ne pas accepter son propre théâtre, il portait le premier coup à la tragédie classique - cette Bastille! - et préparait le triomphe du Romantisme, ce 89 de l'art dramatique?"* Certainly Voltaire was one of the first, although not the first to deal damaging blows to French classical tragedy.

And now, it was Diderot, he of the encyclopedic mind, who took up serious warfare against the classical traditions of the theatre. He was keenly interested in many fields of human endeavor and it is, therefore, not surprising to find him turning his attention to the drama. He was not the originator of the new dramatic form, le drame bourgeois, which was rapidly growing out of the comédie larmoyante; for, Landois' Silvie(1742) and MMe de Graffigny's Cénie(1750)were plays that to a large extent resembled the type of drama which Diderot was to advocate so strenuously. But it was Diderot who took the serious comedy and the ideas developed concerning it, up to his time, and established his new theories of the new in-

* Deschanel, p.419

seignant avec le drame Shakespérien à ne plus nous renfermer dans l'admiration exclusive des anciens, à nous affranchir des règles tyranniques, à briser le moule étroite qui comprimait l'expansion de notre art national, en nous apprenant enfin à ne pas accepter son propre théâtre, il portait le premier coup à la tragédie classique - cette Bastille! - et préparait le triomphe du Romantisme, ce 89 de l'art dramatique?"* Certainly Voltaire was one of the first, although not the first to deal damaging blows to French classical tragedy.

And now, it was Diderot, he of the encyclopedic mind, who took up serious warfare against the classical traditions of the theatre. He was keenly interested in many fields of human endeavor and it is, therefore, not surprising to find him turning his attention to the drama. He was not the originator of the new dramatic form, le drame bourgeois, which was rapidly growing out of the comédie larmoyante; for, Landois' Silvie(1742) and MMe de Graffigny's Génie(1750) were plays that to a large extent resembled the type of drama which Diderot was to advocate so strenuously. But it was Diderot who took the serious comedy and the ideas developed concerning it, up to his time, and established his new theories of the new in-

* Deschanel, p. 449

termediate type.

His was the most serious attempt at reform in the drama in the 18th century. He originally called his type le genre sérieux et bourgeois. And what were to be the characteristics of the new type? We find them clearly stated in his Entretiens sur le Fils naturel. First and ever prominent is to be an appeal to the bourgeois element by a presentation of the virtues of the bourgeoisie as opposed to the vices of the nobility and the privileged classes. The moral edification and instruction of the bourgeoisie was to be the dominant keynote. Again, a blow is struck at the use of characters of high rank; again, the common people are to come on the stage.

In the Second Entretien, he points out that there was far too much speech and far too little action in the theatre. In advocating the replacing of declamation by action, Diderot was demanding a necessary reform which was later demandedby the Romantic theorists. The substitution of pantomime for the "asides" in order to increase the action was another of his insistent demands.

The plea for the abolition of declamation leads to another important point in his dramatic theory; the introduction of realism on the stage. He stressed the fact that costumes and stage settings should conform simply yet accurately to the context of the play. He advocated conformity to historical

termediate type.

His was the most serious attempt at reform in the drama in the 18th century. He originally called his type le genre sérieux et bourgeois. And what were to be the characteristics of the new type? We find them clearly stated in his Entretiens sur le Fils naturel. First and ever prominent is to be an appeal to the bourgeois element by a presentation of the virtues of the bourgeoisie as opposed to the vices of the nobility and the privileged classes. The moral edification and instruction of the bourgeoisie was to be the dominant keynote. Again, a blow is struck at the use of characters of high rank; again, the common people are to come on the stage.

In the second Entretien, he points out that there was far too much emotion and far too little action in the theatre. In advocating the replacing of declamation by action, Diderot was demanding a necessary reform which was later demanded by the Romantic theorists. The substitution of pantomime for the "asides" in order to increase the action was another of his insistent demands.

The plea for the abolition of declamation leads to another important point in his dramatic theory, the introduction of realism on the stage. He stressed the fact that costumes and stage settings should conform simply yet accurately to the context of the play. He advocated conformity to historical

truth in costume and scenery. He frequently demands that actors use pantomime abundantly and act naturally.

Naturalism and simplicity, he believed, would make a dramatic work more beautiful. And then he asks, what is keeping the drama from being natural? Verse! He would do away with verse and substitute prose. An excellent recommendation; for, after all, when did kings and queens or valets and lackeys ever talk in pure alexandrines? He was far more revolutionary than Hugo who merely took some liberties with the cesura and introduced the enjambement.

Another important contribution was the inclusion of minute acting directions. He believed that the player could bring out the ideal imagined by the dramatist by means of action, speech, countenance, voice, movement, and gesture and only in this way is the situation truly depicted. In the Paradoxe sur le Comedien, he frequently advises the actor to watch gesture and to follow its simple and spontaneous lead.

Despite his criticism of the classical traditions, Diderot respected the three unities and adhered to them himself. In his youth Diderot had said:" Et que m'importe à moi, les règles pourvu qu'on me plaise." * Later, however, he says, "Les lois des trois unités sont difficiles à observer mais elles sont sensées." He justifies the unities by the necessity of concentration of the scenes upon the stage because of the limited size of the theatres. He admits, however, that if " nous avions d'immenses scènes, comportantsde nombreuses décorations successives, ou mieux encore, simultanées, la question se poserait autrement." [2]

* Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. IV p. 283
2 Oeuvres Complètes Vol. VII, p. 356

truth in costume and scenery. He frequently demands that actors use pantomime abundantly and act naturally.

Naturalism and simplicity, he believed, would make a dramatic work more beautiful. And then he asks, what is keeping the drama from being natural? Verse! He would do away with verse and substitute prose. An excellent recommendation; for, after all, when did kings and queens or valets and jackeys ever talk in pure alexandrines? He was far more revolutionary than Hugo who merely took some liberties with the cesura and introduced the enjambement.

Another important contribution was the inclusion of minute acting directions. He believed that the player could bring out the ideal imagined by the dramatist by means of action, speech, countenance, voice, movement, and gesture and only in this way is the situation truly depicted. In the Paradoxe sur le Comedien, he frequently advises the actor to watch gesture and to follow its simple and spontaneous lead.

Despite his criticism of the classical traditions, Diderot respected the three unities and adhered to them himself. In his youth Diderot had said:" Et que m'importe à moi, les règles pourvu qu'on me plaise." Later, however, he says, "Les lois des trois unités sont difficiles à observer mais elles sont sensées." He justifies the unities by the necessity of concentration of the scenes upon the stage because of the limited size of the theatres. He admits, however, that if " nous avions d'immenses scènes, comportantes nombreuses décorations successives, ou mieux encore, simultanées, la question se poserait autrement.

Other minor recommendations that he made included the introduction of the dance into the dramatic form and the clearing of the stage of the spectators who were hampering the action of the drama. He was also outspoken in his advocacy of the scenic realization of the piece by means of tableaux.

Diderot himself wrote only two drames, le Père de Famille and le Fils naturel, which were to illustate his dramatic theory. But, alas! they only show his complete inability as a dramatist. Le Père de Famille which is the better of the two had a run of seven performances; but, le Fils naturel could scarcely go through the opening night. Diderot also wrote plans for a number of other plays. The chief weakness in Diderot's works is their proximity to theatrical sermons. The drame was to be the theatrical vehicle for philosophical propaganda. It is for this reason that Diderot felt that the concern of the dramatist should be social conditions rather than individual characters. The stage was to become the new pulpit for the advancement of morality. This was the pitfall into which Diderot fell in trying to reform the French theatre. The new type needed a dramatic genius and such a man was not available.

Diderot exerted a great influence on the contemporary German writers- Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Kotzebue- who

Other minor recommendations that he made included the introduction of the dance into the dramatic form and the clearing of the stage of the spectators who were hampering the action of the drama. He was also outspoken in his advocacy of the scenic realization of the piece by means of tableaux.

Diderot himself wrote only two dramas, Le Père de Famille and Le Fils naturel, which were to illustrate his dramatic theory. But, alas! they only show his complete inability as a dramatist. Le Père de Famille which is the better of the two had a run of seven performances; but, Le Fils naturel could scarcely go through the opening night. Diderot also wrote plans for a number of other plays. The chief weakness in Diderot's works is their proximity to theatrical sermons. The drame was to be the theatrical vehicle for philosophical propaganda. It is for this reason that Diderot felt that the concern of the dramatist should be social conditions rather than individual characters. The stage was to become the new pulpit for the advancement of morality. This was the pitfall into which Diderot fell in trying to reform the French theatre. The new type needed a dramatic genius and such a man was not available.

Diderot exerted a great influence on the contemporary German writers- Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Kotzebue- who

were later to influence the French Romantic drama. Although the type advocated by Diderot did not have many successors, it was undoubtedly one of the chief influences in the rise of the melodrama and through that type in the development of the Romantic drama. The abundance of platitudes, the rudimentary psychology and the puerilely constructed plots are signs of the rising melodrama. The demands for realism, for pantomime, and for more action, are also tendencies toward the melodrama. The drame bourgeois, despite the lack of success in Diderot's hands, was responsible for many new ideas in the drama. Diderot dealt a telling blow on the use of verse in the drama and his attempts to achieve realistic pictures had lasting results.

Beaumarchais, who has been said to embody all of the good and bad qualities of his time, began his dramatic career as a writer of parades for private theatres. He soon came under the influence of Diderot and his dramatic theories and turned to the drame as the medium for achieving dramatic success. His first play, Eugénie, written in 1767, is superior to any of Diderot's works.

The Essai sur le genre sérieux, which precedes Eugénie, contains Beaumarchais' dramatic principles. His interpretation

Beaumarchais, who has been said to embody all of the good and bad qualities of his time, began his dramatic career as a writer of parades for private theatres. He soon came under the influence of Diderot and his dramatic theories and turned to the drame as the medium for achieving dramatic success. His first play, Eugénie, written in 1767, is superior to any of Diderot's works.

The Essai sur le genre sérieux, which precedes Eugénie, contains Beaumarchais' dramatic principles. His interpretation

were later to influence the French Romantic drama. Although the type advocated by Diderot did not have many successors, it was undoubtedly one of the chief influences in the rise of the melodrama and through that type in the development of the Romantic drama. The abundance of platitudes, the rudimentary psychology and the puerilely constructed plots are signs of the rising melodrama. The demands for realism, for pantomime, and for more action, are also tendencies toward the melodrama. The drame bourgeois, despite the lack of success in Diderot's hands, was responsible for many new ideas in the drama. Diderot dealt a telling blow on the use of verse in the drama and his attempts to achieve realistic pictures had lasting results.

of the drame is quite similar to Diderot's. He wished first to rid the stage of royal characters and was anxious that the moral value of the piece be most important. He believes that the drame should offer "une moralité directe et profonde, et ne peut avoir qu'un langage, qui est celui de la nature."* He emphasized, with Diderot, the great importance of accurate décor and costume. He placed at the head of his plays a very painstaking description of the costumes, the necessary stage accessories and the setting of the play. Again, following Diderot, he advocated the increase of the action by the greater use of pantomime. The lengthy descriptions of the costumes and the settings in Eugénie make that play one of the first in which such methods are used.

Beaumarchais strongly opposed the adherence to the classical rules and said:"En quel genre a-t-on vu les règles produire des chefs-d'oeuvre? N'est-ce pas,au contraire, les grands exemples qui de tout temps ont servi de base et de fondement à ces règles, dont on fait un entrave au génie, en intervertissant l'ordre des choses?" Beaumarchais turned to the comedy after his efforts with the drame proved unsuccessful and produced the masterpieces of that type during the 18th century. He also used lengthy descriptions of costumes and scenery in his comedies. It is chiefly in the development of local color that Beaumarchais' works are related to those of the Romantics.

*Essai sur le genre Dramatique, p.37
2 Ibid, p.9,10.

A comparatively unknown critic and writer, Louis Sébastien Mercier, was one of the first to follow in the footsteps of Diderot. He was especially influenced by the desire to use the theatre as an organ for moralizing. The dramatic poet, he felt, was one of the most valuable citizens and his mission was one of the noblest. The theatre was to become a theatre of utility; that is, an institution that would raise the moral standards of the citizens and increase the patriotic devotion of the people. He says, "Quelle sera donc la tragédie véritable? Ce sera celle qui sera entendue et saisie par tous les ordres de citoyens, qui aura un rapport intime avec les affaires politiques, qui tenant lieu de la tribune aux harangues, qui eclairera le peuple sur ses vrais interets, les lui offrira sous des traits frappants, exaltera dans son coeur un patriotisme eclairé, lui fait cherir la patrie dont il sentira tous les avantages."*

He was strongly opposed to the classical tragedies and continued the demands of Diderot for a drame bourgeois. He He points out that the affairs of the common people can furnish fully as much material for the dramatic poet as the lives of kings and queens. "Les tragédies grecques appartenaient aux Grecs; et nous, nous n'oserions avoir notre théâtre, peindre nos semblables, nous attendrir, et nous intéresser

* Nouvel Essai, p.37

Incomparatively unknown critic and writer, Louis Sébastien Mercier, was one of the first to follow in the footsteps of Diderot. He was especially influenced by the desire to use the theatre as an organ for moralizing. The dramatic poet, he felt, was one of the most valuable citizens and his mission was one of the noblest. The theatre was to become a theatre of utility; that is, an institution that would raise the moral standards of the citizens and increase the patriotic devotion of the people. He says, "Quelle sera donc la tragédie véritable? Ce sera celle qui sera entendue et saisie par tous les ordres de citoyens, qui aura un rapport intime avec les affaires politiques, qui tenant lieu de la tribune aux harangues, qui eclairera le peuple sur ses vrais interets, les lui offrira sous des traits frappants, exaltera dans son coeur un patriotisme eclairé, lui fait cherir la patrie dont il sentira tous les avantages."*

He was strongly opposed to the classical tragedies and continued the demands of Diderot for a drame bourgeois. He He points out that the affairs of the common people can furnish fully as much material for the dramatic poet as the lives of kings and queens. "Les tragédies grecques appartenaient aux Grecs; et nous, nous n'oserions avoir notre théâtre, peindre nos semblables, nous attendrir, et nous intéresser

* Nouvel Essai, p. 37

avec eux?" he demands. "Nous faudra-t-il toujours," he continues,"des hommes vêtus de pourpre, environnés de gardes, et coëffés d'un diadême? Des malheurs, qui nous touchent de près, qui nous regardent, qui nous environnent, n'auraient-ils aucun droit à nos larmes? Enfin pourquoi n'aurions-nous pas le courage de dénoncer à la nation les vertus d'un homme obscur? fût-il né dans le rang le plus bas, croyez qu'il deviendra plus grand à nos yeux que ces rois dont le langage altier fatigue depuis longtems nos oreilles." * A theatre that would paint the moeurs of the people would be the ideal theatre, he claims.

Mercier's hatred of the classics and the rule-makers was very pronounced. Boileau, among the critics, and Racine among the dramatists, were the particular targets of his violent denunciations. He says,"Heureux le peuple neuf, qui modifie à son gré ses idées, ses sentiments et ses plaisirs! Aimable et libre élève de la nature..... il se livre à l'effet et ne raisonne point sur la cause. Son coeur n'attend pas l'examen pour bondir de joie, la règle pour pleurer d'attendrissement, le goût pour admirer." He renews the battle of the Ancients and the Moderns of the last years of the preceding century and comes to the attack with more fury and more blasphemous(considered so at the time)remarks than any of the later Romantics, "Il flotte enfin dans les airs le

* Ibid, p. 182

avec eux?" he demands. "Nous faudra-t-il toujours," he continues, "des hommes vêtus de pourpre, environnés de gardes, et coëffés d'un diadème? Des malheurs, qui nous touchent de près, qui nous regardent, qui nous environnent, n'auraient-ils aucun droit à nos larmes? Enfin pourquoi n'aurions-nous pas le courage de dénoncer à la nation les vertus d'un homme obscur? fût-il né dans le rang le plus bas, croyez qu'il deviendra plus grand à nos yeux que ces rois dont le langage altier fatigue depuis longtems nos oreilles." A theatre that would paint the <u>moeurs</u> of the people would be the ideal theatre, he claims.

Mercier's hatred of the classics and the rule-makers was very pronounced. Boileau, among the critics, and Racine among the dramatists, were the particular targets of his violent denunciations. He says, "Heureux le peuple neuf, qui modifie à son gré ses idées, ses sentiments et ses plaisirs! Aimable et libre élève de la nature..... il se livre à l'effet et ne raisonne point sur la cause. Son coeur n'attend pas l'examen pour bondir de joie, la règle pour pleurer d'attendrissement, le goût pour admirer." He renews the battle of the Ancients and the Moderns of the last years of the preceding century and comes to the attack with more fury and more blasphemous (considered so at the time) remarks than any of the later Romantics. "Il flotte enfin dans les airs le

* Ibid, p. 1[illegible]

drapeau de la guerre littéraire," he tells us.(But the banner had been raised long before his time, as has been noted.) However, he reenters with the vigor of youth and the new feeling of the period. "J'aime mieux lire Gil Blas de Santillane, de notre ami Lesage, que tout Boileau; Richardson me touche bien autrement que toutes les tragédies du divin Racine..." Can you imagine the feelings of the classicists, when the novels of a foreign writer are preferred to the works of the classical god, Racine? But, let us continue,"Qu'il avait le goût étroit et faux dans l'ensemble cet homme(Racine) qu'on représente comme un modèle de goût! Peintre manieré il avait des vers qui sont des beautés de cabinet. C'est autre chose qu'une perruque, c'est un criminel: il a tué l'art!" Yes, indeed, the battle was now on in earnest.

He calls upon the youth of his time who have not received"le tenace empreinte du préjuge", to rally around the banner of modernism, to read Shakespeare and to see how he has put on the lips of his heros the "langage de la passion et non celui de la rhétorique." But, above all, he calls upon them to "s'imprégner de l'âme de leur temps, qu'ils consultent la nature et leur propre coeur: ils sauront ce qu'il faut dire à leurs contemporains pour les emouvoir et en être entendus. Qu'on ne les voie plus, suivant la funeste voie de leurs devanciers...."

dragoon de la guerre littéraire." He tells us.(But the banner had been raised long before his time, as has been noted.) However, he reenters with the vigor of youth and the new feeling of the period. "J'aime mieux lire Gil Blas de Santillane, de notre ami Lesage, que tout Boileau; Richardson me touche bien autrement que toutes les tragédies du divin Racine..." Can you imagine the feelings of the classicists, when the novels of a foreign writer are preferred to the works of the classical god, Racine? But, let us continue."Qu'il avait le goût étroit et faux dans l'ensemble cet homme(Racine) qu'on représente comme un modèle de goût! Peintre maniéré il avait des vers qui sont des beautés de cabinet. C'est autre chose qu'une perruque, c'est un criminel: il a tué l'art!" Yes, indeed, the battle was now on in earnest.

He calls upon the youth of his time who have not received"le tocsin emportante du préjuge", to rally around the banner of modernism, to read Shakespeare and to see how he has put on the lips of his heros the "langage de la passion et non celui de la rhétorique." But, above all, he calls upon them to "s'imprégner de l'âme de leur temps, qu'ils connaissent la nature et leur propre coeur: ils sauront ce qu'il faut dire à leurs contemporains pour les emouvoir et en être entendus. Qu'on ne les voie plus, suivant la funeste voie de leurs devanciers...."

The distinctions which kept the various types of dramatic art apart must not be tolerated. The poet must pay no respect to those binding restrictions which have been set up by the traditions of the past."Tombez, tombez, murailles qui separez les genres,"[1] he fairly shouts. The classical works were false to nature and must not be imitated. "Tout drame qui ne peint pas la nature est indigne de l'attention d'un homme sense: c'est un portrait qui ne ressemble pas. Plus le poète sera fidèle à la peinture des événements tels qu'ils s'enchaînent, plus il pourra se flatter de mériter ses succès,"[2] he declares.

He was bitterly opposed to the unities of time and place. He points out how ridiculous the former can make a dramatic work when in the Cid, according to "cette pitoyable règle des 24 heures, qu' il nous offre trois combats singuliers et une bataille, avec plusieurs autres incidents, et qu'il ose encore nous laisser entrevoir le futur mariage de Chimène avec Rodrigue teint du sang du père de sa maîtresse. La bienséance est violée, parce qu'il a voulu la durée de l'action commencât et finît entre deux soleils, tous ces événements accumulés, resserrés et precipités les uns sur les autres sont bien plus incroyables que s'ils étaient répandus sur une plus grande étendue de terrain et semés à des intervalles nécessaires."[3] The unity of place is even more unnatural than the unity of

1. Ibid, p.105
2. Ibid, p.124
3. Ibid, p.107

The distinctions which kept the various types of dramatic art apart must not be tolerated. The poet must pay no respect to those binding restrictions which have been set up by the traditions of the past."Tombes, tombes, murailles qui separes les genres," he fairly shouts. The classical works were false to nature and must not be imitated. "Tout drame qui ne peint pas la nature est indigne de l'attention d'un homme sense: c'est un portrait qui ne ressemble pas. Plus le poète sera fidèle à la peinture des événements tels qu'ils s'enchaînent, plus il pourra se flatter de mériter ses succès," he declares.

He was bitterly opposed to the unities of time and place. He points out how ridiculous the former can make a dramatic work when in the Cid, according to "cette pitoyable règle des 24 heures, qui! il nous offre trois combats singuliers et une bataille, avec plusieurs autres incidents, et qu'il ose encore nous laisser entrevoir le futur mariage de Chimène avec Rodrigue teint du sang de père de sa maîtresse. La bienséance est violée, parce qu'il a voulu la durée de l'action comment et tint entre deux soleils, tous ces événements accumulés, resserrés et précipités les uns sur les autres sont bien plus incroyables que s'ils étaient répandus sur une plus grande étendue de terrain et coupés à des intervalles nécessaires."

The unity of place is even more unnatural than the unity of

time, he declares; and, with equal vigor he attacks this strong hold of the classical traditions.

Dramatic art in France has fallen into a deplorable state becauseof the blind following of the unities of time and place, "deux règles qui, par leur absurdité, devaient être proscrites, et qui ont été avidement adoptées par les poètes français. Ils ne se sont pas aperçus de la perte immense qu'ils allaient faire, en s'assujettissant à des entraves qui devaient nécessairement les priver des plus grandes beautés." * He goes on to say that "les poètes français se sont tous mis volontairement au cachot, en tendant les mains aux chaînes pesantes de deux unités. Que le lieu change donc, et que le temps s'écoule, plutôt que la vérité manque."

There is one unity that must, however, be scrupulously followed; that is, the unity of interest. It is the same demand that was made by La Motte a half-century earlier. Mercier also echoes LaMotte when he states that the necessity of writing inverse is merely the attempt to make writing more difficult. His opposition to uniformity and artificiality would naturally lead him to demand with La Motte and Diderot that verse be abandoned and that prose be the form of expression of the drame. Mercier points out what has been noted about Voltaire's vacillating ideas of dramatic art when he tells us that; "Quand M. de Voltaire a fait l'Enfant prodigue, Nanine,

* Du Théâtre, p.105

time. He declares; and with equal vigor he attacks this strong hold of the classical traditions.

Dramatic art in France has fallen into a deplorable state because of the blind following of the unities of time and place, "deux règles qui, par leur absurdité, devaient être proscrites, et qui ont été avidement adoptées par les poètes français. Ils ne se sont pas aperçus de la perte immense qu'ils allaient faire, en s'assujettissant à des entraves qui devaient nécessairement leur priver des plus grandes beautés." He goes on to say that "les poètes français se sont tous mis volontairement au cachot, en tendant les mains aux chaînes pesantes de deux unités. Que le lieu change donc, et que le temps s'écoule, plutôt que la vérité manque."

There is one unity that must, however, be scrupulously followed; that is, the unity of interest. It is the same demand that was made by La Motte a half-century earlier. Mercier also echoes LaMotte when he states that the necessity of writing inverse is merely the attempt to make writing more difficult. His opposition to uniformity and artificiality would naturally lead him to demand with La Motte and Diderot that verse be abandoned and that prose be the form of expression of the drame. Mercier points out what has been noted about Voltaire's vacillating ideas of dramatic art when he tells us that; "Quand M. de Voltaire a fait L'Enfant prodigue, Nanine

l'Écossaise, la Mort de Socrate, il n'a point manqué dans ses préfaces de préconiser ce nouveau genre; mais des qu'il fait une tragédie, il change d'avis, il foudroye, il détruit les principes qu'il a avancés la veille." Mercier was also bitter in his denunciation of the law which made five acts of equal length a necessary part of the drama.

Why, he demands, is it necessary to go seeking in foreign countries and ancient times for material for the theatre? The lives of the people of recent times in France certainly can supply material which will more readily warm the imagination of the audiences. Is it, he asks, because "le poète se trouve nécessairement plus à son aise, en dessinant des personnages dont on ne connaît plus la physionomie?" A theatre of the people and a national theatre which would teach les moeurs of contemporary times was his ideal. Mercier wrote a number of drames which, with the exception of Sedaine's LE Philosophe sans le savoir, were the most popular of the type. However, in this study, his attempts to break down the classical traditions by means of his critical writings are of most importance.

The first traces of romantic love may be found in the drames of Diderot and Mercier. The verses of Hugo are missing and the prose may be strained very often but the signs are unmistakable. Gaiffe believes that "les héros de Diderot et

* Ibid, p. 169

de Mercier proclament bien avant ceux de Dumas et d'Hugo, la légitimité et l'excellence de leur passions; leurs tirades sont des hymnes enflammés en l'honneur de l'amour."* Mercier was one of the first to seize the spirit of Shakespeare and bring to the stage living characters. His conception of the theatre was radically opposed to the conception of the classical writers. Mercier's treatment of historical figures in his plays, Jean Hennuyer, la Destruction de la Ligue, la Mort de Louis XI, is a step towards the Romantic drama and again shows the influence of Shakespeare.

Mercier anticipates Hugo when he says that the drama should reflect the present life of the nation and comments on the "goût bizarre et bien etrange de dénaturer un ancien théâtre, au lieu d'en constuire un neuf relatif à la nation devant laquelle on parle." Hugo's arguments advanced in favor of realism and local color correspond to Mercier's. When Mercier suggests that the creative force in the youth of the nation must be awakened he again anticipates Hugo's call to arms. His belief in the artist's necessity for self-expression and for affecting his world anticipate the theories of all of the later Romantics. His praise and recommendation of Shakespeare is as forceful as that of Hugo. Mercier lacked the genius necessary for practical success and his audiences were not sufficiently well prepared to grasp the significance

* Le Drame en France, P. Gaiffe, p. 259

de Mercier proclament bien avant ceux de Dumas et d'Hugo, la légitimité et l'excellence de leur passions; leurs tirades sont des hymnes enflammés en l'honneur de l'amour."* Mercier was one of the first to seize the spirit of Shakespeare and bring to the stage living characters. His conception of the theatre was radically opposed to the conception of the classical writers. Mercier's treatment of historical figures in his plays, Jean Hennuyer, la Destruction de la Ligue, la Mort de Louis XI, is a step towards the Romantic drama and again shows the influence of Shakespeare.

Mercier anticipates Hugo when he says that the drama should reflect the present life of the nation and comments on the "goût bizarre et bien etrange de dénaturer un ancien théâtre, au lieu d'en constuire un neuf relatif à la nation devant laquelle on parle." Hugo's arguments advanced in favor of realism and local color correspond to Mercier's. When Mercier suggests that the creative force in the youth of the nation must be awakened he again anticipates Hugo's call to arms. His belief in the artist's necessity for self-expression and for affecting his world anticipate the theories of all of the later Romantics. His praise and recommendation of Shakespeare is as forceful as that of Hugo. Mercier lacked the genius necessary for practical success and his audiences were not sufficiently well prepared to grasp the significance

* Le Drame en France, P. Giuffre, p. 259

of his efforts. But, he did have the genius to collect and complete the views that had been laid down before him and to embody them into a formula that mentioned almost every important tenet of the Romantic theorists.

Sedaine's le Philosophe sans le savoir was the masterpiece of the type advocated by both Diderot and Mercier. This play shows the remarkable gift of dialogue of this writer, as well as his gift in creating a realistic impression. Sedaine, in this play, showed the genius that was lacking in the works of both Diderot and Mercier. (As the theories of this type have been fully discussed, it will be sufficient to give this writer credit for having put these theories into practice.)

The chief lasting influence of the drame bourgeois and the theories of Diderot and Mercier was upon the melodrama of the period that followed the Revolution. The word mélodrame was first used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1766 to describe a prose piece accompanied by music. In 1772, Garcin used this word as a synonym for opéra. The meaning applied to it by Rousseau, however, became general after 1809. Pixérécourt, the so-called "Racine des boulevards", and the most successful of the writers of melodrama, used it in 1802

of his efforts. But, he did have the genius to collect and complete the views that had been laid down before him and to embody them into a formula that mentioned almost every important tenet of the Romantic theorists.

Sedaine's Le Philosophe sans le savoir was the masterpiece of the type advocated by both Diderot and Mercier. This play shows the remarkable gift of dialogue of this writer, as well as his gift in creating a realistic impression. Sedaine, in this play, showed the genius that was lacking in both the works of both Diderot and Mercier. (As the theories of this type have been fully discussed, it will be sufficient to give this writer credit for having put these theories into practice.)

The chief lasting influence of the drame bourgeois and the theories of Diderot and Mercier was upon the melodrama of the period that followed the Revolution. The word mélodrame was first used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1766 to describe a prose piece accompanied by music. In 1772, Garrick used this word as a synonym for opéra. The meaning applied to it by Rousseau, however, became general after 1809. Pixérécourt, the so-called "Racine des boulevards", and the most successful of the writers of melodrama, used it in 1801

in reference to one of his plays, Coelina, ou l'enfant du mystère.

A most excellent definition of the word is the following: "un spectacle fait pour le peuple, composé d'événements tragiques auxquels vient se mêler un élément comique, et qu'accompagnent la musique et la danse, La musique est étroitement unie au mélodrame. Le compositeur de la musique de scène est toujours nommé dans les brochures; sa partition se compose des entrées, des sorties, des passages qui accentuent les situations, et du ballet."* The mélodrame is marked by much local color, elaborate scenery, rapid movement and exposition, and declaration of moral platitudes. There are many unexpected situations and violent actions intended to arouse the physiological emotions of the spectators. The music was at first of much importance as is evidenced by the word itself- melos, (Gr. music). The importance of the music diminished, however, and later died away completely. The appeal to the people was, of course, based upon the principles of the drame bourgeois.

The significance of the pantomime-dialogue in the rise of the mélodrame cannot be minimized. Nicolet, an Italian, had instituted fairs in Paris in 1759 and soon put on gay plays and later more serious ones. He was imitating the opéra and accompanied the action and gestures of his performers with appropriate musical airs and phrases. Audinot, another Italian

* Guilbert de Pixérécourt, W. Hartog

in reference to one of his plays. Docteur, ou L'enfant du mystère.

A most excellent definition of the word is the following:

"un spectacle fait pour le peuple, composé d'événements tragiques auxquels vient se mêler un élément comique, et qu'accompagnent la musique et la danse. La musique est étroitement mêlée au mélodrame. Le compositeur de la musique de scène est toujours nommé dans les brochures; sa partition se compose des entrées, des sorties, des passages qui accompagnent les situations, et du ballet." The mélodrame is marked by much local color, elaborate scenery, rapid movement and exposition and declaration of moral platitudes. There are many unexpected situations and violent actions intended to arouse the physiological emotions of the spectators. The music was at first of much importance as is evidenced by the word itself- melos, (Gr. music). The importance of the music diminished, however, and later died away completely. The appeal to the people was, of course, based upon the principles of the drame bourgeois.

The significance of the pantomime-dialogue in the rise of the mélodrame cannot be minimized. Nicolet, an Italian, had instituted fairs in Paris in 1759 and soon put on gay plays and later more serious ones. He was imitating the opera and accompanied the action and gestures of his performers with appropriate musical airs and phrases. Audinot, another Italian

had put on pantomime-dialogues in a neighboring theatre, which had developed into elaborate scenic displays; in time, the performances of the two neighboring theatres grew closer and not having developed according to any set traditions, they developed in accordance with the tastes of the audience and soon became melodrama. The tastes of the audience were, indeed, a most important origin of the melodrama.

It will be interesting to note the contents of a melodrama as evidenced in the works of Pixérécourt. There are four chief characters; - a villain, whose nature is elemental, that is , who has no good qualities whatever-- an unfortunate woman who is the personification of virtue,- an honnête homme, who is the protector of innocence, -- and, a comic character. We have the main characters, now let us see what happens;i.e.,the action. (In brief) The villain persecutes the virtuous victim who suffers until the moment when her misfortune is greatest at which time the honnête homme comes to save her in the "nick of time" and to deliver her from her enemy with the aid of an exemplary vengeance, assisted by the comic character, a peasant or a soldier.The conflict has been between unmitigated vice and irreproachable virtue. The villain dies, and the hero and the heroine are usually married and virtue has triumphed in the end. The style is marked by grandiloquence, many moral maxims, and an abundance of epithets. The histor-

had put on pantomime-dialogues in a neighboring theatre,
which had developed into elaborate scenic displays; in time,
the performances of the two neighboring theatres grew closer
and not having developed according to any set traditions, they
developed in accordance with the tastes of the audience and
soon became melodrama. The tastes of the audience were, indeed,
a most important origin of the melodrama.

It will be interesting to note the contents of a melo-
drama as evidenced in the works of Pixérécourt. There are four
chief characters; - a villain, whose nature is elemental, that
is , who has no good qualities whatever-- an unfortunate woman
who is the personification of virtue,- an honnête homme, who
is the protector of innocence, -- and, a comic character. We
have the main characters, now let us see what happens;i.e.,the
action. (In brief) The villain persecutes the virtuous victim
who suffers until the moment when her misfortune is greatest
at which time the honnête homme comes to save her in the "nick
of time" and to deliver her from her enemy with the aid of
an exemplary vengeance, assisted by the comic character, a
peasant or a soldier.The conflict has been between unmiti-
gated vice and irreproachable virtue. The villain dies, and
the hero and the heroine are usually married and virtue has
triumphed in the end. The style is marked by grandiloquence,
many moral maxims, and an abundance of epithets. The histor-

ical melodramas, of course, differ in some respects from the ordinary type.

The importance of the mélodrame has, of course, been greatly minimized by the great majority of the literary critics. The rapid rise of the mélodrame and its lengthy and flourishing life, however, attest to its importance. The ideas expressed in the Préface de Cromwell and their practical application in Henri III et sa cour and Hernani were quite familiar to the Parisians many years before 1827. The so-called "grands théâtres" were having a very difficult time in the years after the Revolution. In 1807, the competition of the lesser theatres, the so-called "théâtres des boulevards," had made such enormous inroads upon the patronage of the classical theatres that it became necessary to issue an edict limiting the number of the théâtres des boulevards.

Of course, during the early years the patronage of these theatres came from the lower classes. But, we are told that "aujourd'hui la meilleure société de Paris déserte les grands theatres pour s'enfermer à l'Ambigu."(one of the theatres that produced popular melodramas) And, they came again and again; for, we are informed that Pixérécourt himself had 94 plays presented for a total of 30,000 performances in Paris and the provinces. His first play Les Petits Auvergnats(1797) had a run of 73 performances. Coelina, ou l'enfant du mystère, which was

local melodramas, of course, differ in some respects from the ordinary type.

The importance of the mélodrame has, of course, been greatly minimized by the great majority of the literary critics. The rapid rise of the mélodrame and its lengthy and flourishing life, however, attest to its importance. The ideas expressed in the Préface de Cromwell and their practical application in Henri III et sa cour and Hernani were quite familiar to the Parisians many years before 1827. The so-called "grands théâtres" were having a very difficult time in the years after the Revolution. In 1807, the competition of the lesser theatres, the so-called "théâtres des boulevards," had made such enormous inroads upon the patronage of the classical theatres that it became necessary to issue an edict limiting the number of the théâtres des boulevards.

Of course, during the early years the patronage of these theatres came from the lower classes. But, we are told that "aujourd'hui la meilleure société de Paris déserte les grands théâtres pour s'enfermer à l'Ambigu."(one of the theatres that produced popular melodramas) And, they came again and again; for, we are informed that Pixérécourt himself had 94 plays presented for a total of 80,000 performances in Paris and the provinces. His first play Les Petits Auvergnats(1797) had a run of 73 performances. Coelina, ou l'enfant du mystère, which was

presented in Paris in 1809, had 387 performances in that city and 1089 in the provinces. During a period of thirty years beginning in 1800, his annual revenue was 25,000 francs(a tidy sum, especially in those days). And, Pixérécourt was not alone in achieving such a remarkable success. Ducray-Duminil "the Corneille des boulevards" and many others achieved a success which was worthy of comparison with that of the master.The whole keynote fo the success of the melodrama lies in an understanding of the people for whom the works were written. It was not an appeal to an educated minority, although we have seen that that group did gradually find its way regularly to the théâtres des boulevards. It was an appeal to the people who had just passed through the horrors of the Revolution; the people who wanted to laugh and cry and wanted to listen to moral teachings.

The mélodrame is the chief precursor of the drame romantique by its utter disdain of rules, by the wealth of its decorations, and by the mélange du tragique et du comique. In the préface de Cromwell the mélange of types is repeatedly stressed yet, most of the melodramas had employed this mixture for years. The comic element is introduced into the melodramas by various incidents and remarks which, although not essential to the plot, do aid in carrying the plot forward. The comedy is usually centerd about one character, such as an old peasant or soldier. In Pixérécourt's Christophe Colomb, a peasant cousin is taken along by Columbus as a member of the crew.

presented in Paris in 1809, had 387 performances in that city and 1089 in the provinces. During a period of thirty years beginning in 1800, his annual revenue was 25,000 francs(a tidy sum, especially in those days). And, Pixérécourt was not alone in scoring such a remarkable success. Ducray-Duminil "the Corneille des boulevards" and many others achieved a success which was worthy of comparison with that of the master.The whole keynote to the success of the melodrama lies in an understanding of the people for whom the works were written. It was not an appeal to an educated minority, although we have seen that the strong did gradually find its way regularly to the théâtres des boulevards. It was an appeal to the people who had just passed through the horrors of the Revolution; the people who wanted to laugh and cry and wanted to listen to moral teachings.

The mélodrame is the chief precursor of the drame romantique by its utter disdain of rules, by the wealth of its decorations, and by the mélange du tragique et du comique. In the préface de Cromwell the mélange of types is repeatedly stressed yet, most of the melodrames had employed this mixture for years. The comic element is introduced into the melodramas by various incidents and remarks which, although not essential to the plot, do aid in carrying the plot forward. The comedy is usually centered about one character, such as an old peasant or soldier. In Pixérécourt's Christophe Colomb,a peasant cousin is taken along by Columbus as a member of the crew.

This peasant cousin becomes involved in many comic situations not only on ship-board, but also on the island among the Indians.

Pixérécourt in his historical melodramas had made a practice of citing historical authorities in the footnotes. He tried to create the impression that he was paying strict attention to historical details. This also became one of the practices of the Romantic dramatists. Among the titles of melodramas played after 1799, we find the following: Henri II, Henri III, Henri IV, Marguérite d'Anjou, Pierre le Grand, Jean sans Peur, Charles le Téméraire, Charles VII, Louis XI, Jeanne d'Arc, Marie Stuart, etc. Does this not show that Dumas and Hugo were not the first to treat historical subjects with some degree of historical accuracy? The attempts to achieve historical accuracy led to the emphasis of local color which became of such importance tn the Romantic drama. But, did any Romantic drama display more local color than the following description of the first act of Christophe Colomb ?

Le théâtre est partagé en deux parties horizontales La partie supérieure représente l'arrière du vaisseau monté par Colomb, depuis le mât d'artimon jusqu'à la proue. La partie inférieure représente la chambre dite du conseil... On y voit quelques meubles amarrés, une table, des barils, des coffres, des tabourets... Le fond de la chambre est garni de

Le théâtre est partagé en deux parties horizontales
la partie supérieure représente l'arrière du vaisseau monté
par Colomb, depuis le mât d'artimon jusqu'à la proue. La par-
tie inférieure représente la chambre dite du conseil... On y
voit quelques meubles amarrés, une table, des barils, des
coffres, des tabourets... Le fond de la chambre est garni de

This peasant cousin becomes involved in many comic situations
not only on ship-board, but also on the island among the In-
dians.

Pixérécourt in his historical melodramas had made a prac-
tice of citing historical authorities in the footnotes. He
tried to create the impression that he was paying strict at-
tention to historical details. This also became one of the
practices of the Romantic dramatists. Among the titles of melo-
dramas played after 1799, we find the following: Henri II,
Henri III, Henri IV, Marguérite d'Anjou, Pierre le Grand,
Jean sans Peur, Charles le Téméraire, Charles VII, Louis XI,
Jeanne d'Arc, Marie Stuart, etc. Does this not show that
Dumas and Hugo were not the first to treat historical subjects
with some degree of historical accuracy? The attempts to
achieve historical accuracy led to the emphasis of local color
which became of such importance in the Romantic drama. But,
did any Romantic drama display more local color than the fol-
lowing description of the first act of Christophe Colomb ?

petites croisées, par lesquelles on aperçoit la mer.

Pendant l'ouverture, qui peint d'abord une tempête violente, on entend derrière le rideau les commandements faits d'une voix forte par le maître d'équipage, et toujours précédés d'un coup de sifflet:

Cargue la grande voile! Cargue la misaine! Cargue le artimon! Nous touchons... Tout le monde sur l'avant...(On entend le bruit que font les gens de l'équipage en courant de l'arrière a l'avant) Du monde à la pompe... Charpentier à la cale!... Bouche la voie d'eau...(A ce violent tumulte succede par degrés le beau temps, dont l'orchestre exprime le retour) Hors le grand foc! Hisse les huniers! Borde l'artimon! Dresse la barre!...

And, to make the scene more realistic, we find that the Indians introduced in the later acts speak their own Indian dialect! Pixérécort tells us in the Observation that precedes this play that "Tout y est strictement conformé à la vérité. Le public pensera sans doute comme moi qu'il eut été completemnet ridicule de prêter notre langage à des hommes qui voient pour la première fois des Européens. J'ai donc donné aux habitants de l'île Guanahani l'idiome des Antilles, que j'ai puise dans le Dictionnaire caraïbe composé par le R.P. Raymond Breton, et imprimé à Auxerre." Do not the efforts of the Romantic dramatists to achieve a true local color pale when contrasted with the results of

petites croisées, par lesquelles on aperçoit la mer.

Pendant l'ouverture, qui peint d'abord une tempête violente, on entend derrière le rideau les commandements faits d'une voix forte par le maître d'équipage, et toujours précédés d'un coup de sifflet:

Cargue la grande voile! Cargue la misaine! Cargue la artimon! Nous tombons... Tout le monde sur l'avant...(On entend le bruit que font les gens de l'équipage en courant de l'arrière a l'avant) Du monde à la pompe... Chargeutier à la cale!... Bouche la voie d'eau...(A ce violent tumulte succede par degrés le beau temps, dont l'orchestre exprime le retour) Hors le grand foc! Hisse les bunières! Borde l'artimon! Dresse la barre!...

And, to make the scene more realistic, we find that the Indiana introduced in the later acts speaks their own Indian dialect! Pixérécourt tells us in the Observation that precedes this play that "Tout y est strictement conforme à la vérité. Le public pensera sans doute comme moi qu'il vient été complétement ridicule de prêter notre langage à des hommes qui voient pour la première fois des Européens. J'ai donc donné aux habitants de l'île Guanahani l'idiome des Antilles, que j'ai puisé dans le dictionnaire caraïbe composé par le R.P. Raymond Breton, et imprimé à Auxerre." Do not the efforts of the Romantic dramatists to achieve a true local color pale when contrasted with the results

obtained by this man and some of the other melodramatists?

The drame romantique took over all of the favorite tricks of the mélodrame:- the murders, the duels, the poisonings, the intrigues, the disguises, the recognitions, the surprising situations, the hidden doors, the escapes, and numerous others. Dumas brought the mélodrame into the drame romantique with Henri III et sa cour. The secret passage, the astrologer and his laboratory, the forgotten handkerchief, and the arousal of physiological emotion by forcing la Duchesse to write the letter to Saint-Mégrin by shaking her hand with the iron gauntlet, is not all this but melodrama? The use of physiological emotion, as has been noted, was one of the chief factors contributing to the success of the melodrame. The disguises and poisonings in Lucrèce Borgia; the murders in La Tour de Nesle; the fatal horn, the conspirators who enter " en grands manteaux, chapeaux rabattus, " the domino noir at the final ball, who remains motionless when one speaks to him and in whose eyes one sees "luire une flamme" and who replies with a voice "sépulcrale autant qué on peut le dire," in Hernani; and, numerous other elements in these and other Romantic dramas; do not these elements suggest melodramatic proceedings? The excess action and the artificial and complicated intrigue are also inherited from the the mélodrame.

The underlying theme of Hugo's works was antithesis. This very antithesis was also the foundation of the melodrama. In

obtained by this man and some of the other melodramatists?

The drame romantique took over all of the favorite tricks of the mélodrame:- the murders, the duels, the poisonings, the intrigues, the disguises, the recognitions, the surprising situations, the hidden doors, the escapes, and numerous others. Dumas brought the mélodrame into the drame romantique with Henri III et sa cour. The secret passage, the astrologer and his laboratory, the forgotten handkerchief, and the arousal of physiological emotion by forcing la Duchesse to write the letter to Saint-Mégrin by shaking her hand with the iron gauntlet, is not all this but melodrama? The use of physiological emotion, as has been noted, was one of the chief factors contributing to the success of the mélodrame. The disguises and poisonings in Lucrèce Borgia; the murders in La Tour de Nesle; the fatal horn, the conspirators who enter " en grands manteaux, chapeaux rabattus, " the domino noir at the final ball, who remains motionless when one speaks to him and in whose eyes one sees "Dire une flamme" and who replies with a voice "sépulcrale autant que l'on peut le dire," in Hernani; and, numerous other elements in these and other Romantic dramas; do not these elements suggest melodramatic proceedings? The excess action and the artificial and complicated intrigue are also inherited from the the mélodrame.

The underlying theme of Hugo's works was antithesis. This very antithesis was also the foundation o the melodrame. In

the preface of Lucrèce Borgia, Hugo says, "Prenez la difformité morale la plus hideuse, la plus repoussante, la plus complète; placez-la là où elle ressort le mieux, dans le coeur d'une femme avec toutes les conditions de la beauté physique et de la grandeur royale qui donnent de la saillie au crime, et maintenant melez à toute cette difformité morale un sentiment pur, le plus pur que la femme puisse éprouver, le sentiment maternel; dans votre monstre mettez une mère; et le monstre intéressera, et le monstre fera pleurer, et cette créature qui faisait peur fera pitié, et cette âme difforme deviendra presque belle à vos yeux. La maternité purifiant la difformité morale, voilà Lucrèce Borgia." And a similar statement precedes le Roi s'amuse; but, in this case the difformity is physical- both of these plays illustrate the antithesis in one character.But, it is,nevertheless, the same opposition of vice and virtue which dominated the mélodrame.

Does Hernani contain the Romantic formula? Then let us strip it of the verse and see how close it is to the mélodrame. We find doña Sol, the virtuous woman; don Ruy Gomez, the villain; Hernani, the hero; and the King as the fourth character who eventually aids the hero; and to heighten the contrast, the hero is a bandit and the heroine is a noblewoman.It is necessary to obtain the greatest possible effect; and, this is produced by the introduction of the fatal cor. Whenthe cor sounds Hernani must die and to heighten the contrast, the cor is heard

Hernani must die and to heighten the contrast, the cor is heard
danced by the introduction of the fatal cor. Whenthe cor sounds
ary to obtain the greatest possible effect; and, this is pro-
hero is a bandit and the heroine is a noblewoman. It is necess-
eventually aids the hero; and to heighten the contrast, the
Hernani, the hero; and the King as the fourth character who
We find doña Sol, the virtuous woman; don Ruy Gomez, the villain;
strip it of the verse and see how close it is to the mélodrame.

Does Hernani contain the Romantic formula? Then let us

opposition of vice and virtue which dominated the mélodrame.
theatre in one character.But, it is,nevertheless, the same
formity is physical- both of these plays illustrate the anti-
statement precedes le Roi s'amuse; but, in this case the dif-
la difformité morale, voilà Lucrèce Borgia." And a similar
devienda presque belle à vos yeux. La maternité purifiant
créature qui faisait peur fera pitié, et cette âme difforme
le monstre intéressera , et le monstre fera pleurer, et cette
le sentiment maternel; dans votre monstre mettez une mère; et
un sentiment pur. Le plus pur que la femme puisse éprouver,
cœur d'une femme avec toutes les conditions de la beauté
physique et de la grandeur royale qui donnent de la sainte
au crime, et maintenant mêlez à toute cette difformité morale
complète; placez-la là où elle ressort le mieux, dans le
formité morale la plus hideuse, la plus repoussante, la plus
the preface of Lucrèce Borgia. Hugo says, "Prenez la dif-

when Hernani, the disguised bandit, has again become a nobleman and is at the height of joy and power. It differs from the formula of the mélodrame only in the death of the hero and the heroine; in the mélodrame, the hero and the heroine usually live happily ever after. But it is an open question as to which of the endings is the more ridiculous.

Hugo went back to Diderot, Beaumarchais, Sedaine , and Mercier when he began to expound philosophical theses in his works. For example, Hernani presenting the opposition of a bandit to a king may be termed an attempt to expound democratic theories; in Ruy Blas, the love of a lackey for a queen may be a blow aimed at the division of classes; or, in Dumas' Antony we see le moi against society and much of the success of this play has been attributed to its anti-social significance. In the preface of Lucrèce Borgia, we are reminded of Diderot's ideas when Hugo says, "Aussi espère-t-il(the author) bien, Dieu aidant, ne développer jamais sur la scène(du moins tant que dureront les temps sérieux ou nous sommes), que des choses pleines de leçons et de conseils." The mélodrame had taken over from the drame bourgeois the effort to edify and present a moral lesson; and; now the drame romantique accept it from the mélodrame.

Victor Hugo's two chief contributions to the drame romantique which were to make it slightly different from the mélodrame were the use of verse and the emphasis of the pas-

when Hernani, the disguised bandit, has again become a noble-man and is at the height of joy and power. It differs from the formula of the mélodrame only in the death of the hero and the heroine; in the mélodrame, the hero and the heroine usually live happily ever after. But it is an open question as to which of the endings is the more ridiculous.

Hugo went back to Diderot, Beaumarchais, Sedaine, and Mercier when he began to expound philosophical theses in his works. For example, Hernani presenting the opposition of a bandit to a king may be termed an attempt to expound democratic theories; in Ruy Blas, the love of a lackey for a queen may be a blow aimed at the division of classes; or in James' Antony we see Le moi against society and much of the success of this play has been attributed to its anti-social significance. In the preface of Lucrèce Borgia, we are reminded of Diderot's ideas when Hugo says, "Aussi espère-t-il (the author) bien, Dieu aidant, ne développer jamais sur la scène (du moins tant que dureront les temps sérieux ou nous sommes), que des choses pleines de leçons et de conseils."* The mélodrame had taken over from the drame bourgeois the effort to edify and present a moral lesson; and; now the drame romantique accept-it from the mélodrame.

Victor Hugo's two chief contributions to the drame romantique which were to make it slightly different from the mélodrame were the use of verse and the emphasis of the pas-

sion of love. In a pure melodrama if the hero wished to show his love he would carry away the heroine to the mountains in the midst of a hail of bullets; but, the romantic hero, Hernani, for example, has "élans d'amours furieux"--he loves, suffers, and despairs; but, on the other hand, he approaches the melodramatic "par l'excès de ses passions, par ses attitudes théâtrales, par ses éclats de voix, par ses subites fureurs et ses abattements excessifs."*

The use of verse, we found, was not necessary to the Romantic drama, according to the preface de Cromwell. But, Hugo in writing Hernani did write much admirable verse; one cannot deny its excellence in many places. However, the verse had no proper place in the drama and was merely a surface covering for an ordinary melodrama. The dramas of Hugo written in verse are only melodramas written by a poet of genius(for poetry, not the theatre) The drame romantique was essentially more lyrical than dramatic and Hugo's contribution was missing throughout the 18th century.

Victor Hugo was not the discoverer of some new dramatic form; for, as has been demonstrated, his conceptions were neither new nor revolutionary. He merely took all of the innovations of the 18th century and added to them his gift of lyrical expression. But, this new manner of presentation of his doctrines, and the exaggerated emphasis of his own importanceand the import-

* Le Drame Romantique - Lebout. p.277

sion of love. In a pure melodrama if the hero wished to show his love he would carry away the heroine to the mountains in the midst of a hail of bullets; but, the romantic hero, Hernani, for example, has "élans d'amours furieux"-- he loves, suffers, and despairs; but, on the other hand, he approaches the melodramatic "par l'excès de ses passions, par ses attitudes théâtrales, par ses éclats de voix, par ses subites fureurs et ses abattements excessifs."*

The use of verse, we found, was not necessary to the Romantic drama, according to the preface de Cromwell. But, Hugo in writing Hernani did write much admirable verse; one cannot deny its excellence in many places. However, the verse had no proper place in the drama and was merely a surface covering for an ordinary melodrama. The dramas of Hugo written in verse are only melodramas written by a poet of genius (for poetry, not the theatre). The drame romantique was essentially more lyrical than dramatic and Hugo's contribution was missing throughout the 18th century.

Victor Hugo was not the discoverer of some new dramatic form; for, as has been demonstrated, his conceptions were neither new nor revolutionary. He merely took all of the innovations of the 18th century and added to them his gift of lyrical expression. But, this new manner of presentation of his doctrines, and the exaggerated emphasis of his own importanceand the import-

* Le Drame Romantique - Lebaut. p.277

ance of his ideas and his work, surely give him a place apart from his predecessors. Were he alive today he would certainly be a highly successful press-agent for any article or idea; he was a propagandist of no mean ability. And, the Hollywood producers might well turn to the works of Dumas and Hugo for new material for all-talking, natural color moving-pictures, especially those written in prose; they certainly could find ample material for numerous gorgeous spectacles. We must, however, give Hugo and Dumas credit for having dealt the final blow to the already tottering and nearly dead classical tragedy; but, on the other hand we must recognize the fact that they delayed, to some extent, the rise of the social drama of the latter half of the 19th century.

the rise of the social drama of the latter half of the 19th century hand we must recognize the fact that they delayed, to some extent, tottering and nearly dead classical tragedy; but, on the other Dumas credit for having dealt the final blow to the already numerous gorgeous spectacles. We must, however, give Hugo and written in prose; they certainly could find ample material for for all-talking, natural color moving-pictures, especially those might well turn to the works of Dumas and Hugo for new material propagandist of no mean ability. And, the Hollywood producers highly successful press-agent for any article or idea; he was a from his predecessors. Were he alive today he would certainly be a ance of his ideas and his work, surely give him a place apart

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, Maurice *Les Théâtres des Boulevards*
Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie
Paris 1902

Beclard, Léon *Sébastien Mercier; sa Vie, son Oeuvre, et son Temps*
H. Champion Paris 1903

Brenner, E.D. and Goodyear, N.A. *18th Century French Plays*
Century Co. N.Y. 1927

Brunetière, Ferdinand *Les Époques du Théâtre Français (1636-1850)*
Calmann Lévy Paris 1892

Deschanel, Émile *Le Romantisme des Classiques*
Le Théâtre de Voltaire
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1886

Diderot, Denis *Oeuvres Complètes*
Volume VII
Le Fils naturel
Dorval et moi
Le Père de famille
Le Joueur
Est-il bon? Est-il méchant?
Paradoxe sur le Comédien
Entretiens sur le Fils naturel
Editors: Jules Assézat and Maurice Tourneux
Garnier frères Paris 1875-1877

Dumas, Alexandre *Henri III et sa cour*
Calmann Lévy Paris

Antony
Calmann Lévy Paris

Le Tour de Nesle
Théâtre Complet Vol. IV
Calmann Levy Paris 1890

Crébillon, P.J. de *Rhadamiste et Zénobie*
in Goodyear's *18th Century Plays*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, Maurice. Les Théâtres des Boulevards
Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie
Paris 1902

Becland, Léon. Sébastien Mercier: sa Vie, son Oeuvre, et
son Temps
N. Champion Paris 1903

Brenner, H.D. and Goodyear, M.A. 18th Century French Plays
Century Co. N.Y. 1927

Brunetière, Ferdinand Les Époques du Théâtre Français
(1636-1850)
Calmann Lévy Paris 1892

Deschanel, Émile La Romantisme des Classiques
Le Théâtre de Voltaire
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1886

Diderot, Denis Oeuvres Complètes
Volume VII
Le Fils naturel
Dorval et moi
Le Père de famille
Le Joueur
Est-il bon? Est-il méchant?
Paradoxe sur le Comédien
Entretiens sur le Fils naturel
Édition: Jules Assézat and Maurice Tourneux
Garnier frères Paris 1875-1877

Dumas, Alexandre Henri III et sa cour
Calmann Lévy Paris
Antony
Calmann Lévy Paris
La Tour de Nesle
Théâtre Complet Vol. IV
Calmann Lévy Paris 1890

Crébillon, P.J. de Rhadamiste et Zénobie
in Goodyear's 18th Century Plays

Evans, D.-O. Le Drame Moderne à l'Époque Romantique
Jean Budry et Cie. Paris 1918
(The first two chapters)

Dupont, Paul Houdar de La Motte
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1897

Gaiffe, F. Le Drame en France au XVIIIe siecle
Armand Colin Paris 1910

Glachant, Paul et Victor Le Théâtre de Victor Hugo
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1902

Hallays, ~~Paulx~~ André, Beaumarchais
Hachette et Cie Paris 1897

Hartog, Willie G. Guilbert de Pixérécourt; sa Vie, son Mélodrame, sa Technique et son influence
H. Champion Paris 1913

Hugo, Adèle Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie
Librairie Internationale Paris 1867
(the first four chapters)

Hugo, Victor Lucrèce Borgia
J.P.Méline Brussels 1837
(Also the Préface of Lucrece Borgia)

Hugo, Victor Le Roi s'amuse
Préface of Le Roi s'amuse
J.Hetzelet Cie. Paris

Hugo, Victor Ruy Blas

Hugo, Victor Hernani
Préface de Cromwell
Edited by John R. Effinger Jr.
Scott, Foresman & Co. N.Y.

Jourdain, Eleanor F. Dramatic Theory and Practice in France, 1690-1808

La Chaussée, Nivelle de Le Préjugé à la Mode
In Goodyear's 18th Century Plays

Evans, D.-O. Le Drame Moderne à l'époque Romantique
Jean Budry et Cie. Paris 1918
(The first two chapters)

Dupont, Paul Boudar de La Motte
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1897

Gaiffe, F. Le Drame en France au XVIIIe siecle
Armand Colin Paris 1910

Glachant, Paul et Victor Le Théâtre de Victor Hugo
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1902

Hallays, ~~Paul~~ André, Beaumarchais
Hachette et Cie Paris 1897

Hartog, Willie G. Guilbert de Pixérécourt: sa Vie, son Melodrame, sa Technique et son influence
H. Champion Paris 1913

Hugo, Adèle Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie
Librairie Internationale Paris 1867
(the first four chapters)

Hugo, Victor Lucrèce Borgia
J.P.Méline Brussels 1837
(Also the Préface of Lucrece Borgia)

Hugo, Victor Le Roi s'amuse
Préface of Le Roi s'amuse
J.Hetzelet Cie. Paris

Hugo, Victor Ruy Blas

Hugo, Victor Hernani
Préface de Cromwell
Edited by John R. Effinger Jr.
Scott, Foresman & Co. N.Y.

Jourdain, Eleanor F. Dramatic Theory and Practice in France, 1690-1808

La Chaussée, Nivelle de Le Préjugé à la Mode
In Goodyear's 18th Century Plays

La Motte, Houdar de Discours sur la Tragédie Vol. IV

Lanson, Gustave Esquisse d'une Histoire de la Tragédie Française
H. Champion Paris 1927

Lanson, Gustave Nivelle de la Chaussée et la comédie larmoyante
Hachette Paris 1903

Le Breton, André Le Théâtre Romantique
Boivin et Cie. Paris

Lion, Henri Les Tragédies et les Théories Dramatiques de Voltaire
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1903

Mason, James F. The Melodrama in France from the beginning of the Revolution to the beginning of the Romantic drama
J.H. First Co. Baltimore 1912

Matthews, Brander French Dramatists of the 19th Century
Charles Scribner's Sons N.Y. 1901

Mercier, Louis S. Du Théâtre ou Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique
E. Van Harrevelt Amsterdam 1773

Mercier, Louis S. Le Déserteur
Le Jay Paris 1752

Mornet, Daniel La Question des Règles au XVIIIe siecle in Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France
Armand Colin Paris 1914

Morley, John Diderot and the Encyclopedists
Macmillan Co. N.Y. 1923
(Chapter on the Stage)

Le Drame Romantique Pierre Nebout
Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie
Paris 1897

Parigot, Hippolyte Le Drame d'Alexandre Dumas
Calmann Lévy Paris 1899

La Motte, Houdar de Discours sur la Tragédie Vol. IV

Lanson, Gustave Naissance d'une Histoire de la Tragédie Française
H. Champion Paris 1927

Lanson, Gustave Niveille de la Chanssée et la comédie larmoyante
Hachette Paris 1903

Le Breton, André Le Théâtre Romantique
Boivin et Cie. Paris

Lion, Henri Les Tragédies et les Théories Dramatiques de Voltaire
Hachette et Cie. Paris 1903

Mason, James F. The Melodrama in France from the beginning of the Revolution to the beginning of the Romantic drama
J.H. First Co. Baltimore 1912

Matthews, Brander French Dramatists of the 19th Century
Charles Scribner's Sons N.Y. 1901

Mercier, Louis S. Du Théâtre ou Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique
B. Van Harreveld Amsterdam 1773

Mercier, Louis S. Le Déserteur
Le Jay Paris 1782

Mornet, Daniel La Question des Règles au XVIIIe siecle in Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France
Armand Colin Paris 1914

Morley, John Diderot and the Encyclopedists
Macmillan Co. N.Y. 1923
(Chapter on the Stage)

Le Drame Romantique Pierre Nebout
Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie
Paris 1897

Parigot, Hippolyte Le Drame d'Alexandre Dumas
Calmann Levy Paris 1899

Pixérécourt, Guilbert de Théâtre Choisi
Victor, ou l'enfant de la forêt
Coelina, ou l'enfant du Mystère
La Femme à deux maris
Valentine, ou la Séduction
Christophe Colomb
Tresse Paris 1841-1845

Pitou, Alexis Les Origines du Mélodrame Francaise à la fin du XVIIIe siecle
in Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France (Jan.-Mars)
Armand Colin Paris 1911

Sedaine, Michel-Jean Le Philosophe sans le savoir
Oxford University Press N.Y. 1914

Vial, Francisque et Denise, Louis Idées et Doctrines Littéraires du XIXe siecle
Delagrave Paris 1881

Voltaire, Oeuvres Complètes
Préface des Guèbres
Préface de l'Enfant prodigue
Préface de Nanine
Préface de Socrate
Préface del'Écossaise
Préface de Brutus
Mérope
Zaire
Nanine
Alzire
Mahomet
Tancrède
Garnier Frères Paris 1883

Zola, Émile Nos Auteurs Dramatiques
G. Charpentier Paris 1918
(First two chapters)

Beaumarchais Essai sur le genre dramatique et sérieux
Eugénie
Académie de Bibliophiles Paris 1869

Pixérécourt, Guilbert de Théâtre Choisi
Victor, ou l'enfant de la forêt
Coelina, ou l'enfant du mystère
La Femme à deux maris
Valentine, ou la Séduction
Christophe Colomb
Tresse Paris 1841-1845

Pitou, Alexis Les Origines du Mélodrame Francaise à la fin du XVIIIe siecle
in Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France (Jan.-Mars)
Armand Colin Paris 1911

Sedaine, Michel-Jean Le Philosophe sans le savoir
Oxford University Press N.Y. 1914

Vial, Francisque et Denise, Louis Idées et Doctrines Littéraires du XIXe siecle
Delagrave Paris 1881

Voltaire, Oeuvres Complètes
Préface des Guèbres
Préface de l'Enfant prodigue
Préface de Nanine
Préface de Socrate
Préface de l'Écossaise
Préface de Brutus
Mérope
Zaire
Nanine
Alzire
Mahomet
Tancrède
Garnier Frères Paris 1883

Zola, Émile Nos Auteurs Dramatiques
G. Charpentier Paris 1918
(First two chapters)

Beaumarchais Essai sur le genre dramatique et sérieux Eugénie
Académie de Bibliophiles Paris 1869

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02572 8710